

EXAMINING THE RISE IN MEXICAN DRUG CARTEL RELATED VIOLENCE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the US Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Homeland Security Studies

by

MICHAEL A. TEIXEIRA, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, US COAST GUARD
B.S., US Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut, 2000
M.S., University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 2004

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2016

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				<i>Form Approved</i> <i>OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 10-06-2016		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) AUG 2015 – JUN 2016	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Examining the Rise in Mexican Drug Cartel Related Violence				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) LCDR Michael A. Teixeira				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) US Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301				8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT From 2006 through 2012, Mexico witnessed an unprecedented rise in drug cartel-related violence within its borders. When local police were unable to restore security, the Mexican government responded with a direct assault on the cartels employing both federal police and the military to restore order. Despite the government efforts, the levels of violence continued to escalate. The border region with the United States was the center for violence as cartels fought for control over smuggling routes, and Ciudad Juarez was the border city who saw the highest murder rates. These facts raise the question: What factors caused the rise in cartel-related violence in Mexico from 2006 to 2012? This study analyzes the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez over three time periods that include the Fox, Calderon, and Nieto Presidencies and completes a comparative analysis of cartel organization, local and federal government actions, and outside influences to determine the causes of the increased violence. The results show ineffective policing and governance at the local level followed by the failed kingpin strategy of the Calderon administration compounded the ongoing war between the drug cartels and led to the exponential rise in cartel-related violence during the period.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Drugs, Cartels, Violence, Mexico, Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO), drug war					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT (U)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 103	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: LCDR Michael A. Teixeira

Thesis Title: Examining the Rise in Mexican Drug Cartel Related Violence

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Gustav A. Otto, M.S.

_____, Member
Richard E. Berkebile, Ph.D.

_____, Member
David W. Christie, M.A.

Accepted this 10th day of June 2016 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

EXAMINING THE RISE IN MEXICAN DRUG CARTEL RELATED VIOLENCE, by
LCDR Michael A. Teixeira, 103 pages.

From 2006 through 2012, Mexico witnessed an unprecedented rise in drug cartel-related violence within its borders. When local police were unable to restore security, the Mexican government responded with a direct assault on the cartels employing both federal police and the military to restore order. Despite the government efforts, the levels of violence continued to escalate. The border region with the United States was the center for violence as cartels fought for control over smuggling routes, and Ciudad Juarez was the border city who saw the highest murder rates. These facts raise the question: What factors caused the rise in cartel-related violence in Mexico from 2006 to 2012? This study analyzes the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez over three time periods that include the Fox, Calderon, and Nieto Presidencies and completes a comparative analysis of cartel organization, local and federal government actions, and outside influences to determine the causes of the increased violence. The results show ineffective policing and governance at the local level followed by the failed kingpin strategy of the Calderon administration compounded the ongoing war between the drug cartels and led to the exponential rise in cartel-related violence during the period.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the US Army Command and Staff College faculty and staff for aiding my professional education throughout this year. Further thanks goes to my staff group who had to put up with me every day. They kept me grounded, laughing, and learning during the long days of army planning. A special thanks to my thesis committee, Mr. Gustav Otto, Dr. Richard Berkebile, and Mr. David Christie, for the time, effort, and encouragement you gave me in completing this research. Their academic insights and constructive feedback were instrumental to my professional growth.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife Jill and children Tommy, Emily, Justin, and Mason for their love and support this year as I completed this endeavor. Their support and encouragement were keys to my success.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS.....	ix
ILLUSTRATIONS	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	2
The Current State of Drug Cartels Operating in Mexico	4
Tijuana Cartel.....	4
Sinaloa Cartel.....	4
Juarez Cartel.....	4
Gulf Cartel	5
Los Zetas	5
Beltran Leyva Organization.....	5
La Familia Michoacana.....	6
Ciudad Juarez.....	7
Primary Research Question	7
Secondary Research Questions	8
Assumptions.....	9
Limitations and Delimitations	10
Definitions	11
Significance of Study.....	14
Organization.....	15
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	20
Government Reports	21
News Outlets.....	22
Independent Research Articles	22
The Cartels.....	24
The Mexican Government	26
Other Significant Factors	27
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	31

Ciudad Juarez Background: Pre-2000	33
Ciudad Juarez Case Study 1: The Fox Presidency 2000-2006	34
Ciudad Juarez Case Study 2: The Calderon Presidency 2006-2012.....	34
Ciudad Juarez Case Study 3: The Nieto Presidency 2012-Present.....	35
Violence	35
Cartels and Organization	36
Local Governments.....	36
Federal Government	37
Other Significant Factors	37
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS	39
Ciudad Juarez Case Studies	39
Ciudad Juarez Background	39
Ciudad Juarez Case Study 1–The Vicente Fox Presidency, 2000-2006	41
Violence	41
The Cartels and their Organization	43
Local Government	44
Mexican Federal Government.....	45
Other Significant Factors	45
Ciudad Juarez Case Study 2–The Felipe Calderon Presidency, 2006-2012	46
Violence	47
The Cartels and their Organization	49
Local Government	51
Mexican Federal Government.....	52
Todos Somos Juarez	54
Other Significant Factors	56
Ciudad Juarez Case Study 3–The Enrique Nieto Presidency, 2012-Present	57
Violence	58
The Cartels and their Organization	60
Local Government	61
Mexican Federal Government.....	61
Other Significant Factors	63
Comparative analysis	63
Violence	64
The Cartels and their Organization	66
Mexican Government–Local	67
Mexican Government–Federal.....	68
Other Significant Factors	70
Results.....	71
Ciudad Juarez.....	71
Mexico	72
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	79

Conclusions.....	79
Recommendations.....	83
Issues for Future Study	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	88

ACRONYMS

DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
GOM	Government of Mexico
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
PAN	National Action Party [<i>Partido Accion Nacional</i>]
PF	Federal Police [<i>Policia Federal</i>]
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party [<i>Partido Revolucionario Institucional</i>]
PRONAPRED	Social Prevention of Violent Crime [<i>Programa Nacional de Prevencion del Delito</i>]
US	United States

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Case Study Comparison Method	32
Figure 2. Homicide Rates per 100,000 people 2001-2006.....	42
Figure 3. Homicide Rates per 100,000 people 2007-2012.....	48
Figure 4. Homicides Rates per 100,000 people 2013-2015	59
Figure 5. Homicide in Ciudad Juarez over all case studies.....	65

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The drug trade in Mexico has been rife with violence for decades, though the level and the severity of violence we are seeing today is unprecedented. Without minimizing the severity of the problems we are confronted with today, it is nonetheless critical to understand the background of the “culture of violence” associated with Mexican DTOs and the cyclical nature of the “violence epidemics” with which Mexico is periodically beset.

— Kevin L. Perkins and Anthony P. Placido
US Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control

Mexico is in the midst of a major rise in violence perpetrated by their drug trafficking cartels. In nine of the past ten years, Mexico experienced more than 10,000 homicides per year making it one of the most violent countries in the world.¹ The Mexican government launched a major initiative in an attempt to quell the rising crime rates and regain control over its territory. After six years of increased cartel-related murder rates, 2013 and 2014 statistics are finally beginning to show evidence that violent crime is leveling out.² This study investigates the sharp escalation of violence within Mexico and analyzes the many factors causing the brutal hostilities. The factors leading to the violence are examined through a comparative analysis of three case studies that review the violence perpetuated by drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in Ciudad Juarez over three distinct time periods segmented by the presidencies of Vicente Fox, Felipe Calderon and Enrique Pena Nieto. Each case closely examines the active cartels and their organization, the Ciudad Juarez local government’s actions, the Mexican federal government’s response, and other significant factors that affect the level of violent crime. The results show ineffective policing and governance at the local level followed by the failed kingpin strategy of the Calderon administration compounded the ongoing war

between the drug cartels and led to the exponential rise in cartel-related violence in Mexico from 2006 to 2012.

Background

The world's fourteenth largest country by land size, Mexico with its one hundred and sixteen million inhabitants, shares its northern land border with the United States. This close proximity has led to a solid trade partnership with seventy-eight percent of Mexican exports destined for the United States. Mexico's national wealth is solid with a gross domestic product of just under two trillion dollars, twelfth in the world. However, much of the nation's wealth is irregularly dispersed as evidenced by the government who reports forty-five percent of the population lives below the poverty line.³

The Mexican government had been dominated by the seventy-one year reign of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI for its Spanish initials). In 2000, Vicente Fox became the first non-PRI elected president as the conservative National Action Party (PAN for its Spanish initials) party took power. In the last two decades, Mexico has looked to strengthen economic ties and increase security cooperation with the United States. However, rampant corruption throughout all levels of government, high unemployment, and the inability to solve social justice issues has left the population frustrated with their government.⁴ This lack of social mobility options has led to many young people turning to crime as a means to support themselves.

For more than a century, drug trafficking cartels operated in Mexico moving a variety of illegal substances from cocaine to liquor. The porous border separating the United States and Mexico allowed these organizations to ship drugs north into the hands of consumers while funneling money and weapons south to be used by the cartels.⁵

Mexican DTOs supply American consumers with marijuana, methamphetamines and heroin. Additionally, the State Department estimates that ninety percent of the cocaine is smuggled into the United States transits from South America through Mexico.⁶ Mexico's DTOs use violence and bribery to ensure they can continue to traffic hundreds of millions of dollars worth of drugs through Mexico and into the United States each year. They use violence to discipline employees, enforce transactions, limit the entry of competitors, and coerce public authorities. Bribery is used with corrupt government officials to ensure impunity and facilitate smooth smuggling operations and wholesale transactions.⁷

In 2006 when President Calderon took office, there were five major drug cartels in Mexico: Gulf, Juarez, La Familia Michoacana, Sinaloa and Tijuana. Each cartel dominated large areas in Mexico and also operated abroad with combined annual gross revenues of between five and ten billion dollars.⁸ Additionally, they used their wealth to corrupt law enforcement officials and politicians to ensure their smuggling operations were uninhibited. "Those they could not bribe, they threatened or killed; in the past five years, the cartels have assassinated 32 mayors and 83 police chiefs, along with an number of journalists. *Plata o plomo?* (silver or lead?) was their motto."⁹ President Calderon's strategy of employing the Mexican military to track down the cartels' top leaders was forceful, but unfocused, and analysts believe it led to the fragmentation of the cartels into smaller organizations and diversification of their criminal activities beyond narcotics smuggling.¹⁰ The following provides a short summary of the most active DTOs within Mexico as of April 2013.

The Current State of Drug Cartels Operating in Mexico

Tijuana Cartel

Also referred to as the Arellano Felix Organization, is a cartel based in the border town, Tijuana, adjacent to San Diego, California, a lucrative trafficking route. This cartel was once one of the two most dominant in Mexico, but now has yielded much of its power. In 2008 when the leadership was arrested, the Sinaloa Cartel began a war for the territory and now controls the route along with most of Baja California. Some analysts speculate the Tijuana Cartel is still in power in their city, or they pay the Sinaloa Cartel for rights to access routes through the territory.¹¹

Sinaloa Cartel

One of the most dominant in Mexico, the Sinaloa Cartel controls territory and trafficking routes throughout its home state of Sinaloa as well as the major crossing points in Tijuana and Juarez. The Sinaloa Cartel is highly diversified and able to smuggle the drugs heroine, marijuana, cocaine, and methamphetamines via all shipping means: land, sea and air.¹² They are led by Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman who in 2015 escaped a Mexican maximum security prison through an elaborate tunnel project. He was recaptured by Mexican authorities in 2016.¹³

Juarez Cartel

Also referred to as the Vicente Carrillo Fuentes Organization, this DTO was formerly in a federation with the Sinaloa Cartel, but spilt off to form its own organization in 2008. Since then, the city of Juarez has been the center of the turf war between the

Sinaloa Cartel and the new Juarez Cartel. Analysts believe the Juarez Cartel has lost nearly all its territory to the Sinaloa Cartel.¹⁴

Gulf Cartel

Based in the border city of Matamoros in the state of Tamaulipas in north eastern Mexico, this cartel was once one of the country's most powerful. A former leader, Osiel Cardenas, Guillen, recruited and corrupted former Mexican military forces who formed the enforcement arm of the cartel known as Los Zetas. After his arrest in 2003, the Zetas split off to form a separate organization and fought the Gulf Cartel for much of its territory. The Gulf Cartel still maintains control over small pockets within the state of Tamaulipas.¹⁵

Los Zetas

Originally formed from corrupted Special Forces members of the Mexican Army as hired assassins of the Gulf Cartel, this organization now is the nation's most violent. Splitting from the Gulf Cartel in 2008, Los Zetas began a war with other cartels over smuggling corridors all over Mexico including the southern border crossing from Guatemala. Today Los Zetas control the drug trade throughout much of the eastern half of Mexico.¹⁶

Beltran Leyva Organization

Once part of the federation run by the Sinaloa Cartel, this cartel sought independence in 2008 when it was believed Guzman, the leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, aided authorities in the arrest of a Beltran Leyva leader, Alfredo Beltran Leyva. The

Beltran Leyva Organization formed a temporary alliance with Los Zetas for fight against the Sinaloa Cartel for important trafficking routes.¹⁷

La Familia Michoacana

This organization was formed as a vigilante group to fight off retail drug pushers in the Mexican state of Michoacan. However, they moved into methamphetamine production and trafficking while maintaining ideological justifications and a Robin Hood image. When their spiritual leader, Nazario Moreno, was killed by Mexican Federal Police in 2010, a new organization emerged calling themselves the Knights Templar.¹⁸

The current organization of the Mexican DTOs is extremely fluid. Some analysts believe fragmentation brought upon by the kingpin strategy of the Mexican government forced the cartels to shift from a rigid vertical structure to a more horizontal configuration of loosely connected groups.¹⁹ Eduardo Guerrero, a security analyst has categorized the cartels into four groups to more easily understand their capabilities and spheres of influence. These categories include: national cartels, toll collector cartels, regional cartels and local mafias. According to Guerrero, the only remaining national level cartels are the bitter rivals Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel. Controlling the Eastern and Western sides of Mexico respectively, these cartels currently operate important international routes into Mexico for several different drugs. The Tijuana and Juarez cartels are categorized as toll collector cartels, charging fees for the use of smuggling corridors along the Northern border they control. The remaining cartels fall into the categories of regional cartels or have further fragmented into smaller local mafias with limited national power.²⁰

Ciudad Juarez

Located just three hundred feet across the border from El Paso, Texas, Ciudad Juarez, also referred to as Juarez, is the state of Chihuahua's largest city. Its proximity to the United States makes Juarez an important transportation hub for legitimate commerce flowing between nations. It also hosts a large number of assembly factories, called *maquiladoras*, where raw materials from the United States are processed and returned to United States (US) markets without the burden of duty taxes from either country.²¹ Additionally, a large number of illegal narcotics flowed into the United States through routes in the vicinity of Juarez. For many years, the Juarez Cartel, also known as the Vicente Carrillo Fuentes Organization, controlled the smuggling routes in and around the city. After a rift with the Sinaloa cartel, violent crime spiraled out of control as a power struggle ensued.²² By 2008, thirty-six percent of all Mexican homicides took place in Ciudad Juarez making it the country's most dangerous city. Beginning in 2011, the levels of violence began to decline in Juarez. The government touted the decline was due to successful law enforcement efforts and improved social reform projects within the city. However, media and security analysts believed the Sinaloa Cartel had finally won control of the Juarez corridor or come to an agreement with the Juarez Cartel on its use and thus reduced the violence.²³

Primary Research Question

What factors caused the rise in cartel-related violence in Mexico from 2006 to 2012?

This research thesis studies the rise in violence within Mexico during the Felipe Calderon Presidency. Shortly after President Calderon took office, he responded to

increased drug violence by sending the military into his home state of Michoacan.²⁴

While his strong frontal attack on the cartels did have some success, arresting twenty-five of the top thirty-seven most wanted DTO leaders²⁵, the cartels responded with their own methods of unprecedented violence; Cartel-related homicides reached their peak in 2011 rising to over 27,000 throughout Mexico as compared to only 8,800 in 2007.²⁶

Secondary Research Questions

1. Did the cartels, the Mexican government, or US government contribute to the violence?

This study reviews the use of military and federal police forces to regain the security of cities with extremely high rates of violent crimes. Due to the assumed level of corruption within the local governments and police forces, President Calderon used the tactic of employing his military forces inside affected cities with the hopes of stopping the violence and maintaining security. However, this tactic did not always gain the intended results as often the levels of violence rose in response to the use of military or federal police forces. In fact, some analysts believe portions of the violence were at the hands of the federal forces; there have been many reports of human rights violations by the military who is untrained in domestic law enforcement.²⁷ The US government supported Calderon's efforts and developed an aid program called the Merida Initiative to further support the Government of Mexico's (GOM) strategy. In December 2012, President Nieto took office and has attempted to shift the national focus from security to improving economic prosperity. Even though he has deployed many of the same tactics as his predecessor, he has maintained a low profile and conducted security operations

without the media fanfare. Early statistics indicate the rates of violent crimes were leveling off or falling thus validating President Nieto's strategy.²⁸

2. Are the actions by the cartels, the Mexican government, and the US government related to each other?

This study reviews the actions of the cartels and the Mexican and US governments in order to determine how they are related to each other. The cartels' initial violence was aimed at rival cartels with limited spillover into the general population. Then as the Mexican government began to crackdown on the cartels, the cartels retaliated with more violence. Even when the government was successful at capturing or killing a top DTO leader, then result was not always less violence. In certain instances, the ensuing power struggle after the removal of the strong leader led to more violence. Understanding of the types of violence and the correlation to government actions is an important step in developing a successful strategy to combat DTOs.²⁹

Assumptions

Due to the illegal nature of the drug trade, it is difficult to comprehend the true motives or ideological goals of the drug cartels. This research assumes the cartels aim to transport narcotics as quickly and efficiently as possible in order to maximize their profits. Relationships between cartels or with their associated street gangs are established to gain access to territory and transport routes to better facilitate transportation and increase earnings. Further, it is assumed the violent tactics used by the cartels is a means to which they seek their end of financial gain. The use of violence by criminal organizations allows them to retain territory and enforce contracts. Unlike religious terrorists groups, this study assumes the cartel-related violence is not an end in itself.³⁰

Limitations and Delimitations

The drug trade has three major sectors that affect the economic and social aspects of the illegal activity: the producers, the traffickers, and the users. This study is limited to the trafficker and the tactics employed to maintain the smuggling routes. More specifically, this thesis will only study the DTOs based in Mexico and those particular cartels who maintain and use routes crossing into the United States. This study will not include the producers in South, Central or North America. Additionally, this study will not report on the consumer sector of illegal drugs or the ongoing debate of legalization within the United States or Mexico. This study is further limited by the selected case studies that focus on Ciudad Juarez and the rapid changes in cartel-related violence within the city. The limited scope of this research enables deep exploration of the many factors that triggered the city's sharp rise in crime.

This study will research the activities of Mexican DTOs and the effects on the Mexican population and Mexican government institutions. The United States government has invested significant resources in combating the illegal drug trade, however; this study will not discuss US federal, state, or local government policy or actions unless there is a direct effect of Mexican DTOs tactics or the recent surge in violence. Furthermore, despite the reported extent of Mexican cartel influence over street gangs within the United States, I will not include in depth research into US based drug trafficking or street level retail organizations.

Timely and accurate crime reports are notoriously difficult to gain from the Mexican government. Mexican media outlets often provide only sporadic data on crimes linked to the drug cartels due to threats of violence aimed at the reporters themselves. For

example in 2007, the first full year of the Calderon Presidency, there were 2,800 murders linked to the cartels within Mexico. By 2011, that number had climbed to an estimated 16,414. This value is estimated because the Mexican government only release organized crime data for the first three quarters of the year; the remaining quarter was computed by the Trans-border institute based on data from Mexican media outlets. The irregularity of GOM reports makes tracking the exact numbers of cartel-related violence difficult.³¹ Further, the reports may be inaccurate due to the difficulty of determining which murders were cartel-related and which were general crime. Finally, the number of murders could be skewed due to the number of bodies never found and never reported missing.³² This study is limited by the accuracy and availability of crime data; therefore, a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach is used to isolate and describe the factors leading to the rise in violence.

Definitions

Democratic Revolutionary Party, PRD [*Partido de la Revolucion Democrática*].

This center-left party broke away from PRI in 1988 and remains today as Mexico's third most influential political party. A diverse constituency generally is committed to social development and increased state involvement in the economic sector.³³

Drug Cartel. A large, highly sophisticated federation composed of multiple sub-organizations and cells with specific assignments such as drug transportation, security of territory, enforcement of transactions, or money laundering; first used in Colombia in 1980.³⁴ Drug Cartels' operations are designed to limit competition or fix prices within the illegal drug trade in order to maximize financial gain and operate with impunity through methods of violence, extortion, and corruption.³⁵

Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO). “A complex organization with highly defined command-and-control structures that produce, transport, and/or distribute large quantities of one or more illicit drugs. These organizations derive tens of billions of dollars annually from the trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs and associated activities. All of the adverse societal impact resulting from the illicit drug trade begins with the criminal acts of DTOs that produce, transport, and distribute the drugs.”³⁶ A synonym of drug cartel.

Federal Police, PF [*Policia Federal*]. Mexico’s federal police force under the authority of the Secretary of the Interior. This force was created in 1999 with the merging of multiple federal law enforcement agencies including: Federal Highway Police, the Fiscal Police, the Investigation and national Security Center and military personnel from the Army’s 3rd military police brigade.³⁷

Gendarmerie. A para-military wing of the Federal Police. Created during President Nieto’s administration to combat the drug cartels while restricting the use of the Mexican military conducting law enforcement on its citizens.³⁸

Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI [*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*]. This party ruled over Mexico from 1929 through 2000 without an interruption. PRI is pro-business and supports free trade and is generally considered centrist. PRI regained the presidency in 2012 when Enrique Peña Nieto was elected and remains the strongest political party in Mexico today.³⁹

Kingpin Strategy. The methodology of specifically targeting the top leader within a criminal organization for arrest and prosecution. Also referred to as decapitation, this strategy looks to weaken a DTO’s influence by removing its leadership. A potential

downside to this strategy is the power vacuum, left after the kingpin is removed can insight violence as other members within the organization look to move up to fill the void.⁴⁰

Merida Initiative. A partnership between the United States and Mexico to aid reduction of drug related organized crime and associated violence. Based on shared responsibility and mutual trust, the initiative has four pillars: disrupt organized criminal groups, strengthen institutions, build a 21st century border, and build strong and resilient communities. The US Congress has appropriated \$1.6 billion since 2008 when the Merida Initiative began.⁴¹

National Action Party, PAN [*Partido Accion Nacional*]. One of the top three Mexican political parties, this conservative party supports greater private-sector involvement and a smaller role for the state in economic activity. PAN dislodged PRI's seventy-one year reign when Vicente Fox was elected president in 2000. Additionally during President Felipe Calderon's administration from 2006-2012, the PAN party supported major reforms in the telecommunications, financial, and energy industries.⁴²

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). A comprehensive trade agreement that sets the rules of trade and investment between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Since the agreement entered into force on January 1, 1994, NAFTA has systematically eliminated most tariff and non-tariff barriers to free trade and investment between the three NAFTA countries.”⁴³

Spillover Violence. The phenomenon of violence committed in US border states and transportation hubs deriving from Mexican cartels including aggravated assault, extortion, kidnapping, torture, rape, and murder. The victims of these crimes include

illegal immigrants being smuggled into the United States, Mexican or US citizens working with the cartels or their innocent family members, and those not associated in any way with the cartels or transnational gangs.⁴⁴

Significance of Study

The trafficking of illegal drugs across national borders is a significant problem for any nation. Within the Americas, the movement of these narcotics from South American producers through Mexico and into the United States poses a major security problem for all countries along the route. The financial reward for the DTOs provides them the power to influence territory, the population and government institutions while seeking their own interests. Often, these cartels turn to violence as a way to maintain profits and continue operations with impunity.⁴⁵

The Mexican cartels have expanded far beyond the simple movement of drugs from Central America into the United States and now pose a serious threat to the population and government of Mexico. The extremely high profits enabled the corruption of officials and law enforcement officers at every level of federal, state and local government. The recent violence carried-out by the drug cartels aimed at securing territory to facilitate their smuggling operations had a devastating impact to the surrounding communities. Additionally, the recent expansion of criminal activity by the drug cartels into non-drug related sectors poses additional threats to the Mexican government. Thus far, the inability for the government of Mexico to deal with the rise in violence by the drug cartels places doubt in the minds of the Mexican people if their government is still in control.⁴⁶

The criminal instability within Mexico also effects the United States. Mexico is one of only two countries that share a land border with the United States making the Mexican border a focus area of security risks. In recent years, free trade has encouraged growing economic ties to Mexico and increased the flow of people and goods across the border. The US Department of Homeland Security is charged with protecting the homeland from both internal and external threats. Mexican DTOs pose a threat to US national interests in three specific ways. First, the illegal drugs they transport poisons consumers and degrades the social fabric as they fight the grip of addiction. Second, once the cartels have established the routes in which to smuggle the drugs, the specific cargo can easily change to whatever the black market consumer is willing to pay for; including weapons to be used by terrorist organizations. These routes are also used to smuggle cash and weapons southbound into Mexico further degrading border security. The third concern for the United States is the potential for spillover violence to affect the population of border states. Already, many of the cartels operating in Mexico have active components working within US cities and transportation hubs.⁴⁷ These components have close ties to US gangs who manage the retail sale of the drugs to local consumers. Despite the relatively low violent crime rates due to narcotics trafficking within the United States, this string of illegal activity creates a strong potential for a significant security threat to US citizens. All countries within the Americas are affected by the illegal drug trade and must work together to reduce the influence of the DTOs.

Organization

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the problem of increased of drug related violence within Mexico including a brief history of the cartels. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on

the topic of Mexican DTOs and the rise in violence in Mexico since 2000. The extensive literature includes newspapers, governmental reports, independent institutions and academic research. Chapter 3 explains the research methodology used to gather the evidence and focus the analysis. The three case studies are defined as well as the significant markers to be compared and analyzed across each case. Chapter 4 details the research findings for each of the three case studies and describes the analysis leading to the results. Finally, chapter 5 lays out the conclusions derived from the analysis and provides recommendations based on the study.

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³ Clare Ribando Seelke, *Mexico: Background and US Relations* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 2014), 2, accessed February 4, 2016, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42917.pdf>.

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¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations*, 20-21.

²⁰ Guerrero, "Security, Drugs, and Violence in Mexico," 28.

²¹ Girish Gupta, "Mexico's Macho Blood Sport," *New Statesman*, February 14, 2011, 36, accessed February 9, 2016, MasterFILE Premier, EBSCOhost.

²² Benita Heiskanen, "Living with the Narcos: The 'Drug War' in the El Paso-Cuidad Juarez Border Region," *American Studies in Scandinavia* 45, no. 1/2 (January 2013): 151, accessed January 4, 2016, America: History and Life with Full Text, EBSCOhost.

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²⁵ Dudley, "Drug Deals."

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³¹ Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations*, 24-25.

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³⁴ National Drug Intelligence Center, "Drug Trafficking Organizations," accessed November 14, 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs38/38661/dtos.htm>; International Crisis Group, "Pena Nieto's Challenge," 3.

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³⁷ Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment, “Mexico–Internal Affairs”; Guerrero, “Security, Drugs, and Violence in Mexico,” 20.

³⁸ Eduardo Guerrero, “Towards a Transformation of Mexico’s Security Strategy,” *The RUSI Journal*, 158, no. 3 (June 2013): 9, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2013.807579>.

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⁴⁰ Guerrero, “Security, Drugs, and Violence in Mexico,” 63.

⁴¹ US Department of State, “Merida Initiative,” accessed November 14, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/merida/>.

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⁴³ NAFTA NOW, “North American Free Trade Agreement,” accessed November 14, 2015, http://www.naftanow.org/about/default_en.asp.

⁴⁴ Nelson F. Hackmaster Jr., “The Diversification of Mexican Transnational Criminal Organizations and its effects on Spillover Violence in the United States” (Master’s thesis, Command and General Staff College, 2013), 9.

⁴⁵ Guerrero, “Security, Drugs, and Violence in Mexico,” 27.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Americans saw drug trafficking as a crime, a law and order issue, and drug consumption as a health issue, but not as a threat to national security. Mexicans viewed drug related violence and arms trafficking as a public safety issues, and money laundering and corruption as a political issues. The perception was that since US with its superior capabilities could not deal with drug and arms trafficking and money laundering, the best Mexico could do is to contain the DTOs.

— Gerry A. Andrianopoulos
National Security Redefined: Calderon's "War on Drugs."

There is a seemingly endless amount of information documenting the war on drugs in Mexico. Since the rise in violence beginning in 2006, more and more institutions and organizations have joined the discussion to aid the government in generating policy options and promoting public awareness beyond the border cities within the United States. Additionally, news outlets, both print and web-based, report the latest information and provide detailed analysis on the levels and causes of violence at the hands of the DTOs. This study attempts to research information from all sources without bias in order to gain insights into the problem from all points of view. This chapter provides an overview of the literature available on this topic and is organized as follows: an overview of the sources of data used for this research, followed by the three main categories linked to the violence: the cartels, the Mexican government, and other significant factors.

This chapter provides detailed information on the sources of data and analysis in an attempt to understand the extent of the literature and the major themes related to the Mexican drug cartels' violent tactics. Only sources published in English were cited; however, every attempt has been made to ensure the completeness of the research

including finding translated documents and data. Fortunately, the majority of authors throughout the literature frequently cite Spanish language articles published from Mexican and other Latin American media outlets thus mitigating the effects of a single language research. Many articles cited in this work also include onsite research within the cities most affected by the violence and include interviews with local Mexican politicians and law enforcement officials. The works cited for this research can be categorized as government reports, news outlets, and independent research articles.

Government Reports

Both the US and Mexican governments produce reports and provide information about the war on illegal drugs and the resulting violence perpetrated by the cartels. From the US government, in-depth articles on the drug trafficking organizations are produced by the Congressional Research Service. This service produces reports for the US Congress and is not affiliated with any political party. Their reputation as an objective, nonpartisan research group whose goal is to provide US congressmen with policy and legal analysis on current issues.¹ Congressional Research Service research provides profiles of each of the major cartels operating in Mexico. Additionally, the research includes an overview of the Mexican government's policies and methods to combat the cartels and reduce the violence within their country.²

The Government of Mexico reports statistics on homicides through two main sources. First, the National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Information publishes data on all deaths regardless of cause or motive. Violent crime and specifically drug cartel related homicides are published through Mexico's National Public Security System. This department has been criticized for its irregularity of releasing crime data.

During the early part of Enrique Nieto's Presidency, the National Public Security System stopped providing data altogether.³ Although published in Spanish, many news organizations and research institutions process this data and reproduce it for English speaking readers.

News Outlets

A plethora of newspapers report regularly on the drug wars in Mexico. Within Mexico, there are two major news organizations who frequently report crime data: *Reforma* and *Milenio*.⁴ Since these organizations only publish information in Spanish, this research relied on the translation and analysis by secondary authors. Within the United States, many prominent news organizations report recent criminal activity and provide in-depth analysis into who perpetrated the crimes and their probable motives. Major US newspapers who report regularly on Mexican drug cartels include: LA Times, Washington Post, The Dallas Morning News, El Paso Times. Additionally, many online publications report information on the Mexican drug war.

Independent Research Articles

A number of institutions headquartered in the United States and abroad are dedicated to the understanding of issues facing Mexico today. These institutions support research and programs to help Mexico deal with their problems including violent crime at the hands of the drug cartels. One example is the Woodrow Wilson Center - Mexico Institute, an organization who "seeks to improve understanding, communication and cooperation between Mexico and the US"⁵ The Mexico Institute focuses on five key issues: Security and the Rule of Law, Economic and Competitiveness, Migration and

Migrants, Border Issues, and Energy. A second institute reporting issues of violence in Mexico is the Trans-Border Institute at the University of San Diego. This institute “promotes research, outreach and dialogue on border issues”⁶ between the United States and Mexico. Moreover, many scholarly articles have been published on Mexico’s war on drugs. Scholarly Articles published in academic journals include: Small War Journal, Brookings Institute, Journal of International Affairs. Contributors to these journals are often from a diverse group of academics and practitioners whose in-depth research leads to new ideas for solving problems facing today’s society.⁷

A large number of international organizations report data on violent crime and drug related criminal activities throughout the world. The International Crisis Group is “an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to preventing and resolving deadly conflict.”⁸ This group reports on the violence caused by drug cartels and provides recommendations to federal, state and local governments on ways to stem the violence. Another resource is the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime who “collects data on crime and the operation of criminal justice systems in order to make policy-relevant information and analysis available in a timely manner to the international community.”⁹ Yet another resource for crime and human rights violations both within Mexico and throughout the world is Amnesty International. This Nobel Peace Prize winning organization seeks to create a grassroots global movement of people to fight injustice. They produce annual human rights reports for many countries including Mexico and have specifically focused on the alleged human rights offenses by the military and federal police during the recent government crackdown on the cartels.¹⁰ Finally, INTERPOL is the world’s largest international police organization whose role is to

“enable police around the world to work together to make the world a safer place.”¹¹

INTERPOL uses technology to meet the challenges and fight crime in the 21st century.

They provide data to police communities to aid in bring criminals to justice. Specifically, they track wanted and missing persons worldwide.

Throughout the literature, three main factors are most often cited for leading to the rise in Mexico’s drug cartel-related violence. The first are the cartels fighting against each other for control of the lucrative smuggling routes. Second is the highly corrupt and untrained state and local police forces who offer the cartels impunity to carryout violence without the threat of recourse. Finally, the Mexican federal government’s strategy to take on the cartels with a frontal assault in an attempt to take back control of their country likely prompted even more violence from both the cartels and those charged with defeating them. While most authors acknowledge the violence can be contributed to a variety of factors, the weight of the blame on the government versus the cartels is disputed. The following sections will review the categories of factors identified in the literature.

The Cartels

Beginning in the early twenty-first century, the Mexican drug cartels began to battle for greater control over the traditional smuggling routes into the United States. As fragile alliances cracked, cartels looked to maintain their strength through attacks on the competing groups. This prompted new methods and organizations where cartels spawned enforcement wings to carry out attacks and protect their territory. These enforcement wings were often comprised of ex-military and relied on brutal tactics to ensure they were

feared and respected by rival gangs. There was little variance in the literature indicating the cartels were the one of the main perpetrators of the recent spike in violence.

Several sources published profiles of the drug cartels that have been useful during this research. A popular online news organization, InSight Crime, is “a foundation dedicated to the study of the principal threat to national and citizen security in Latin America and the Caribbean: organized crime.”¹² Patrick Corcoran with InSight Crime has reported extensively on the major drug cartels and maintains current profiles detailing their history and current organization. The profiles provide in-depth analysis of the key leaders within each organization as well as the groups’ territory and other criminal activities beyond narcotics trafficking. Additionally, Mario Loyola published a thorough breakdown the cartels changing structure in the National Review. He explains the best example of a violent enforcement wing is the Los Zetas cartel. Beginning as an enforcement wing of the Gulf Cartel, the Zetas were comprised of mostly of former Special Forces commandos. The Zetas “developed the sort of platoon- and company-size tactical operations that one associates with full blow insurgencies.”¹³ The Zetas have since split from the Gulf Cartel and now nearly dominate the entire eastern half of Mexico.¹⁴ June Beittel an analyst for the Congressional Research Service provides further evidence showing how the cartels were reorganizing and relying more on violent tactics with their employment of local street gangs. These street gangs were loosely aligned with the cartels and could recruit hundreds of soldier to carryout enforcement activities to perpetuate other street crimes like kidnapping, extortion, and vehicle theft. These gangs are not tightly linked to the businessmen-type leaders of the cartels and are more prone to violence.¹⁵

The Mexican Government

Much has been written about the failures of the Mexican government to protect its people from the effects of the drug cartels. Corruption is the most cited factor which enabled the cartels to dominate the landscape and often the blame is shared amongst the local, state and federal governments where corruption is rampant. At the state and local levels, corruption produces municipal police who are on the payrolls of the drug cartels to aid in attacks on rivals or ensure impunity while operating the smuggling business.

Corruption is not the only problem plaguing local governments. Untrained police officers, a judicial system in dire need of reforms, and a lack of social programs to aid the impoverished top the list of state and local government shortcomings. The International Crisis Group has published several articles focused on the violence in Mexico and the government's response. While producing "Pena Nieto's Challenge: Criminal Cartels and Rule of Law in Mexico," in 2013, the International Crisis Group conducted frontline research including scores of interviews with government officials at both the national and municipal levels as well as federal and local law enforcement officers. Researching the problem from all angles, they also interviewed personnel working for non-government organizations, grassroots movement leaders, and both former and current cartel members. The authors recognized four major challenges which lie ahead for both federal and local governments under Nieto: poor police training and a lack of coordination between federal and local police; high rate of impunity for crimes committed showing a poor justice system; corruption throughout all levels of government; and social exclusion and poverty.¹⁶ These shortcomings are most pronounced at the local level where the cartels or citizen defense forces have begun to fill the roles of city governments.

Similarly, the Mexican federal government has been criticized for its actions to reduce the cartel's influence on society and reduce the violence. An article published in the Journal of International Affairs, written by Nathaniel Parish Flannery condemned President Calderon's administration for its actions. Flannery's thesis showed, during the time period, Mexico experienced the most rapid rise in violence, the Mexican government employed the wrong strategy to solving the drug war problem.¹⁷ First, the author notes after a slight increase in cartel related violence, President Calderon sent in large amounts of troops from the Mexican military in an attempt to increase security. However, it was after the troops were deployed when the sharpest rates in violence grew. He claimed the actions of the federal forces, arresting or killing cartel leaders, led to the internal struggles for power and other cartels moving in to seize territory when long-running cartel leaders were dislodged.¹⁸ Flannery goes further to point out Calderon "adopted a unilateral response to an international problem and failed to take sufficient measure to adequately protect his own country's population from the unintended side effects of his strategy."¹⁹ Calderon needed to develop better partnerships with other nations to further combat actions by narcotics producers in South America as well as the consumers in the United States.

Other Significant Factors

Additional factors which cannot be classified as either cartel or Mexico's government have been contributed to the increased violence. One factor is the global economic recession beginning in 2008 which left many within Mexico's workforce out of the job. This is especially true for the border regions where *maquiladora* workers lost work as the North American economies slowed and shifted towards relying on imports

from China. As Howard Campbell reports in May-June 2011 edition of the *NACLA Report on the Americas*, the laid off workers, many of them young, had nowhere to turn.²⁰ The aggressively recruiting street gangs offered an income, and many young Mexicans joined.

A second significant factor is the United States. Again, there are few who dispute the American consumer is the fuel which feeds the profits and power engine of the drug suppliers. Further, the US government law enforcement policies also had an effect on the violence in Mexico. As Khirin Bunker points out in his article in the *Small Wars Journal* in 2015, the United States began to crackdown on the trafficking routes through the Caribbean. This change left the Colombian suppliers with only one other option, the routes through Mexico. Then with the US government's efforts to eliminate Colombia's top kingpin, Pablo Escobar, the Mexican cartels seized the opportunity to gain even more control over trafficking the South American cocaine. This shift awarded the Mexican cartels increased profits and more power over the narco-trafficking enterprise.²¹

Through the review of the pertinent literature published on the rising violence at the hands of the Mexican drug cartels, three factors can be categorized as leading to more violence. The cartels themselves have adapted to frequent fights over territory to become more horizontally aligned using enforcement wings and local gangs as subcontract killers. Additionally, rampant corruption and poor policing by the Mexican government enabled the cartels to murder civilians and rivals with impunity. Finally, outside factors such as the global economic market and shifts in US counterdrug policy had a significant effect on cartels and their violent tactics.

This thesis study will attempt to narrow the lens from the whole of Mexico onto one city where the violence has been extreme, Ciudad Juarez, and compare the main factors identified in the literature across three distinct time periods. This case study comparison will test to see if the generalized factors found in the literature about the whole country also apply to one municipality. Additionally, the case study will attempt to identify additional factors which may have been missed by reviewing data across the entire country.

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² Beittel, *Mexico’s Drug Trafficking Organizations*, 33-35.

³ Molzahn, Ferreira, and Shirk, “Drug Violence in Mexico,” 17.

⁴ Heinle, Molzahn, and Shirk, “Drug Violence in Mexico,” 9-12.

⁵ Wilson Center, “The Mexico Institute,” accessed November 1, 2015, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/about-21>.

⁶ University of San Diego, “The Trans-Border Institute,” accessed November 21, 2015, <http://www.sandiego.edu/peacestudies/institutes/tbi/about/>.

⁷ Columbia University, “Journal of International Affairs,” accessed November 21, 2015, <http://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/about/>.

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¹⁰ Amnesty International USA, “About Amnesty International,” accessed November 21, 2015, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/about-us>.

¹¹ International Criminal Police Organization, “Overview of INTERPOL,” accessed November 21, 2015, <http://www.interpol.int/About-INTERPOL/Overview>.

¹² InSight Crime, “About Us,” accessed November 21, 2015, <http://www.insightcrime.org/about-us>.

¹³ Mario Loyola, "Mexico's Cartel Wars," *National Review* 61, no. 11 (June 2009): 36, accessed November 19, 2015, MasterFILE Premier, EBSCOhost.

¹⁴ InSight Crime, "Zetas," accessed November 21, 2015, <http://www.insightcrime.org/mexico-organized-crime-news/zetas-profile>.

¹⁵ Beittel, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations*, 19-20.

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, "Pena Nieto's Challenge," 1-44.

¹⁷ Flannery, "Calderon's War," 182.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Howard Campbell, "No End in Sight: Violence in Ciudad Juarez," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 44, no. 3 (May 2011): 21, accessed January 4, 2016, Political Science Complete, EBSCOhost.

²¹ Bunker, "Old and New Governmental-Criminal Relationships in Mexico."

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to control multiple sale points, criminals need to control the territory in which they operate. All those bars, strip clubs, convenience stores, street dealers . . . all of them require close supervision on a daily basis. So, controlling the territory is a *conditio sine qua non* for this new and additional business and that, in turn, requires controlling law enforcement agents.

— Felipe Calderon

Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime: Connected but Different

The research methodology used is a qualitative approach using analysis of secondary sources in order to identify causal factors in the rise of violence perpetrated by Mexican drug cartels in the early twenty-first century. I examine three case studies and compare them across a series of markers in order to determine key factors that answer the research questions. Each case study explores Ciudad Juarez, a city whose rapid rise in cartel violence gave it the unwanted label of the murder capital of the world¹. This chapter informs the reader of the case studies used and the markers considered for analysis. Additionally, this chapter explains why the markers were used and briefly explores alternatives that were excluded.

The case studies are broken down by time periods that include: the Fox Presidency from 2000-2006, the Calderon Presidency from 2006–2012, and the Nieto Presidency from 2012 to present. Within each case study, this research examines and compares several markers having a direct impact on cartel-related violent crime, see figure 1. The first set of markers are related to violent crime within the city to include murders, at the hands of cartel members, of both rival cartels and the civilian population. The second set of markers examine the cartels operating within Ciudad Juarez and the

organizational structure within each cartel. Third are actions taken by the Juarez municipal police, local government, and local community groups. The fourth set of markers consider the actions of the Mexican federal government and include the overall strategy against the cartels. The final markers are comprised of other miscellaneous outside factors to include changes in the global economy and actions taken by the United States government effecting the cartels' actions. Each set of markers are compared across each case study in order to isolate critical factors or triggers leading to the increased violence.

	Fox 2000 – 2006	Calderon 2006 – 2012	Nieto 2012 – Present
Violence			
Cartels & Organization			
Local Government			
Federal Government			
Other			

Figure 1. Case Study Comparison Method

Source: Created by author.

Ciudad Juarez represents a suitable case study to identify the causes of violent action by Mexican organized crime. First Ciudad Juarez, like the entire Mexican nation, experienced a sharp rise in cartel related violence within the years studied. During this time period, a war broke out between the Sinaloa Cartel and the Juarez Cartel over control of the lucrative smuggling routes in and around the city.² As a result of this struggle and the government's response, the number of homicides in Juarez rose to more than ten times the national rate.³ The spike in violence within Juarez was only temporary as violent crime numbers returned to the pre-2007 norm after 2011. Additionally, the Mexican federal government responded to the violence in Juarez with swift and powerful show of force in an attempt to make an example of Juarez area cartels. Ciudad Juarez's extreme shifts in rise and fall of cartel-related violence along with the government reaction provided an excellent case in which to examine possible causes and then through inductive reasoning draw broader conclusions for the country of Mexico as a whole. Finally, Ciudad Juarez is an important city within Mexico due to its location and economic potential. Located just across Rio Grande from the United States this city has been an economic power in Mexico for decades. It hosts almost fifteen percent of all of Mexico's *maquiladoras*, or assembly factories, providing employment opportunities to thousands. Ciudad Juarez maintains a prosperous city center with many shops and restaurants providing a vibrant night life; especially compared to the relatively sleepy El Paso, Texas, its border neighbor.⁴

Ciudad Juarez Background: Pre-2000

This serves to establish a baseline for the remaining studies and provides the reader with the required background information on the cartels operating within Juarez as

well as the city itself. This study emphasizes the stronghold the PRI party had on Mexican national politics and the party's relationship with the drug trafficking organizations. Finally, this background helps the reader to understand the outside factors leading to the rise in power of the cartels and other factors influencing Mexican economics and politics.

Ciudad Juarez Case Study 1: The Fox Presidency 2000-2006

This study begins with the first PAN party candidate elected as president in Mexico in seventy-one years.⁵ This case study is defined by the Vicente Fox Presidency beginning in December 2000 and ending in December of 2006. It includes many subtle events that shaped Mexico and Ciudad Juarez including shifts in United States border security and counter-drug policies as well as changes in the global economy. Although this study shows no major changes in violence in Juarez, each marker will be analyzed in an attempt to identify any triggers or causes to the rise in violence early in the subsequent cases.

Ciudad Juarez Case Study 2: The Calderon Presidency 2006-2012

This study is defined by the Presidency of Felipe Calderon, the second consecutive PAN President. The Calderon Presidency marked a major shift in national policy in dealing with the cartels and the presumed corruption within all levels of the Mexican government. Additionally, it is within this study where we notice a major escalation in violence within the entire country, especially in Ciudad Juarez. This era also marks an improved collaboration initiative between the United States and Mexico.

Ciudad Juarez Case Study 3: The Nieto Presidency 2012-Present

This study marked by the Enrique Pena Nieto Presidency, saw a sharp drop in violent crime within Ciudad Juarez. The Nieto Presidency began in December 2012 and marked the return of the PRI party to power within Mexico. President Nieto's candidacy included less emphasis on combating the cartels as well as an increased focus on economic and social reforms at the national level. This study, although incomplete since Nieto's term does not expire until 2018, allows the exploration for evidence of what the future might hold to help shape recommendations.

Within each case study, this research examines and compares several markers having a direct impact on cartel-related violent crime. These markers are organized by actions or groups who take actions that potentially had an impact on violence within Juarez. The following sections explain each set of markers to be analyzed and why the markers were selected.

Violence

Violent crime types include murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, extortion and other street crimes. This set of markers also looks deeply at the type of perpetrator of these crimes to identify if they are a major cartel operator, a member of the cartel enforcement cell or a local gang member. Additionally, this marker set attempts to analyze the victim in order to establish the perpetrator's motive.

For murders and attempted murders, this study analyzes the types of victims as a method to identify the cartels rational behind the violence or for clues leading to key factors in the escalation of violence. In general the victims of murders and attempted murders fall into four groups: intra-gang members, rival gang members, ordinary citizens,

or special citizens. Intra-gang violence can be a result of infighting within a cartel in order to gain power after a leader is lost or to over-throw a weak leader. Rival gang members are simply members of competitor cartels or gangs vying for more territory or expanding into new drug markets. Ordinary citizens are citizens not related to the drug trafficking operations or the cartels struggle for power and are often victims by chance or used to send a message to other gangs in the particular territory. Special citizens are those victims who are targeted because they hold political office or are members of the media who report on the violence by the cartels. Further markers consist of those labeled “other violence” and specifically include: kidnapping, extortion, and street crimes.

Cartels and Organization

The cartels marker examines the major cartels operating in Ciudad Juarez and why they are conducting drug trafficking operations there. These markers include the organization of the cartels and examines their leaders. Finally, this marker analyses the separate enforcement arms of the cartels and their use of local gangs to maintain territory. The cartels are examined because they are the perpetrators of the violent crime. Understanding the number of cartels, their relationship with one another and the internal organizations provides clues to the factors causing the rise in violent crime.

Local Governments

The state and local governments marker includes the actions taken by local leaders and elected officials. This marker looks at the level of corruption within the local government and local police department and the relationship to the cartels operating within Ciudad Juarez. Additionally, this set of markers includes action by local

community groups to reduce the violence and spur on economic and social improvement within the city. Local governments and municipal police forces have an impact on crime levels within a community. Actions, inactions or corruption within a local government set the stage for the level of influence criminal organization can have on the local community. Furthermore, local business and community leaders can impact economic and social changes that indirectly influence crime within neighborhoods and cities.

Federal Government

The Mexican federal government marker includes the general strategy to combat organized crime and the use of the military or federal police forces. Additionally, any national level initiatives taken to reduce violence, the drug trade or social injustice within Mexico. This set of markers is important in Juarez due to the major federal government response to the rise in cartel related violence. This is also an important marker to consider when extrapolating Juarez data to determine key factors in violence across the whole country.

Other Significant Factors

The final markers are comprised of other outside influences effecting cartel-related violence. These influences include actions taken by the United States government such as international treaties or collaboration initiatives with Mexico. The North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement is one example of an outside influence that had social and economic implications within Juarez for many years. Changes in the international drug market also indirectly affect the cartels in Juarez to include consumer preferences within the United States and Europe. These markers are included because they provide a frame

of reference behind the actions of cartels within Juarez. Drug trafficking activity and the methods to secure the territory to maintain that activity is a global enterprise. Further miscellaneous outside factors that influence the actions of the drug cartels within Juarez are explained within the chapter 4.

From these case studies focused on Ciudad Juarez and markers defined above, this paper attempts to identify factors leading to the nation-wide rise in violence. Through the case study comparison methodology, this research isolates and identifies key factors tied to the rise in violence. Finally, this study formulates recommendations for actions that might aid in reducing violence in other Mexican cities or throughout the nation as a whole.

¹ Shannon K. O'Neil, "Saving Ciudad Juarez," Council on Foreign Relations, May 12, 2015, accessed November 12, 2015, <http://blogs.cfr.org/oneil/2015/05/12/saving-cuidad-juarez/>.

² Flannery, "Calderon's War," 186.

³ Elyssa Pachico, "Juarez Murder Rate Reaches 5-Year Low," InSight Crime, accessed January 4, 2013, <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/juarez-murder-rate-reaches-5-year-low>; Molzahn, Ferreira, and Shirk, "Drug Violence in Mexico," 5.

⁴ David Bacon, "Voices from the Juarez Workers Movement," North American Congress on Latin America, accessed April 11, 2016, <https://nacla.org/news/2016/04/06/voices-ju%C3%A1rez-workers-movement>.

⁵ Bunker, "Old and New Governmental-Criminal Relationships in Mexico."

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

State and local officials said that the decrease in crime is due to better coordination among all three levels of government in investigations and arresting criminals, tougher sentences, better equipped law enforcement agencies and citizen engagement as it pertains to reporting crimes.

— Lorena Figueroa
Homicides in Juárez in 2015 drop to '07 levels

Ciudad Juarez Case Studies

Through the methodology described in the last chapter, three case studies are described and analyzed across five specific markers in order to determine the cause of the rise in cartel-related violence in Mexico. This chapter is organized into three sections: first a detailed description of the case studies of Ciudad Juarez, second, an analysis of the markers across each case study, and third, results of the analysis.

Ciudad Juarez Background

To provide a basis for understanding the three case studies presented in this chapter, it is necessary to review Ciudad Juarez's history prior to 2000. A distinct characteristic of Juarez is the number of *maquiladoras* that operate in and around the city. *Maquiladoras* are assembly factories where goods are shipped in from the United States, assembled into products, and returned to the US market. The *maquiladoras* offered good jobs to Juarenses (those from Juarez) and many people flocked to the border city from all over Mexico. In 1993, the passing of NAFTA dramatically increased the trade between the United States and Mexico, \$81 billion in 1993 increased to \$231 billion in 2002.¹ This increase in trade also drove a large boost in jobs in the *maquiladoras*. Between 1990

and 2000, the city's population grew from 798,499 to more than 1.1 million; however, Juarez city officials were not prepared for the boom. "The city's social services could not keep pace with the explosion in population."²

At the same time, the US government increased counterdrug interdictions in the Caribbean in an attempt to slow Colombian cocaine from entering its shores.³ The pressure from law enforcement forced smugglers to increase illicit trafficking over land routes to compensate for the lost sea lines of communication. This fact coupled with the increased cross-border traffic from the *maquiladoras* made Juarez a prime location to smuggle drugs. The rise in demand plus the increase in potential cargo led to the drug traffickers' huge financial profits which in turn led to more power.⁴ In order to stay competitive traffickers made alliances and formed larger organizations. The Juarez Cartel was originally formed in 1980s under Rafael Aguilar Guajardo, who mysteriously was killed in 1993. His lieutenant, Amado Carrillo Fuentes took control, hugely expanding the cartel during his tenure at the top. His alias, "Lord of the Skies," was due to his method of flying narcotics from South America into northern Mexico and then transporting the drugs into the United States via land routes. Carrillo Fuentes died in 1997 while undergoing plastic surgery. His brothers, Vicente Carrillo Fuentes and Rodolfo Carrillo Fuentes along with their nephew (Amado's son), Vicente Carrillo Leyva established control.⁵

Prior to 2000 while Mexico was under its seventy-one year rule by the PRI, the drug kingpins were also under the influence of the federal government who ensured the violence did not spread to ordinary citizens. This began to change during the 1990s as Mexico's political power began to decentralize from its authoritarian rule and pushed

toward democratic pluralism.⁶ The democratization of Mexico had side effects such as the drug cartels gaining new freedom to carry out business in any manner they saw fit.⁷

Ciudad Juarez Case Study 1–The Vicente Fox Presidency, 2000-2006

This case study is defined by the Vincente Fox Presidency beginning in December 2000 and ending in December of 2006. It includes many subtle events that shaped Mexico and Ciudad Juarez including changes to an alliance between the drug cartels and the shift to a more democratically elected government both at the state and federal levels. Additionally, this study reviews changes in United States border security and counter-drug policies and the effects on the Mexican cartels. Although this study shows no major changes in violence in Juarez, each marker is analyzed in an attempt to identify any triggers or causes to the rise in violence during the next study.

Violence

Cartel-related homicides were relatively low for this period. Total homicides in Juarez from 2001 through 2006 remained steady near 350 annually with no major fluctuations. When taking the population into account, the homicide rate (homicides per 100,000 in population) showed Juarenses were two to three times more likely to be killed than compared to the overall Mexican population on average, see figure 2. No specific data on Juarez kidnapping, extortion, or auto theft was identified during this time period.

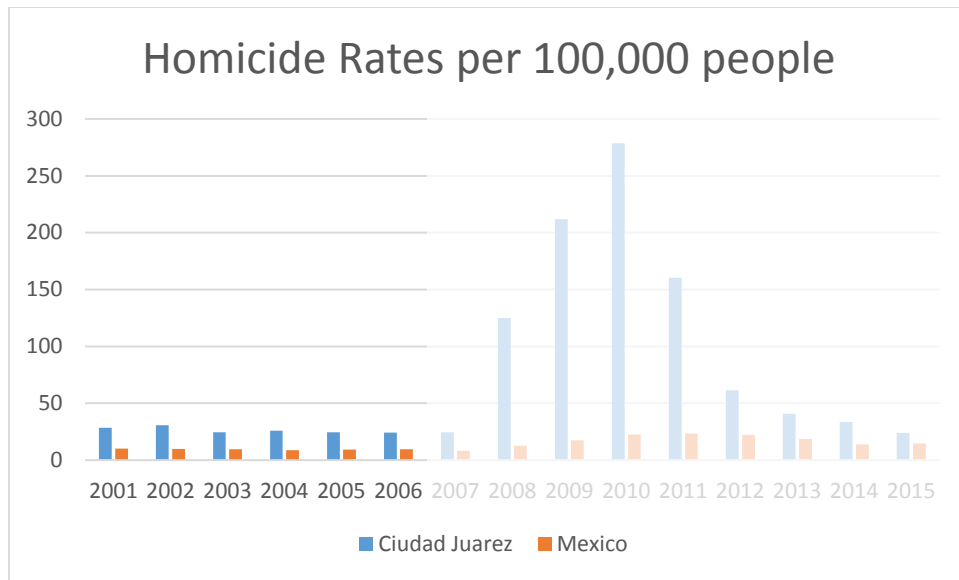


Figure 2. Homicide Rates per 100,000 people 2001-2006

Source: Author’s graphic depiction of data consolidated from Carlos J. Vilalta, “Towards an Understanding of Community Organization Against Crime: The Case of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico,” *Stability* 2, no. 1 (March 2013): 3, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.ao/>.

While not directly tied to the drug cartels, one startling fact was the number of female murder victims in Juarez. A local newspaper estimated 878 women were killed between 1993 and 2010. Many of the victims were tortured and raped before their death, and many of the bodies were dumped in the vast desert surrounding Juarez. Analysts believed these femicides were due to the large number of *maquiladoras* within Juarez. These assembly plants mostly hired women who work long hours for low wages. The *maquiladoras* boomed after the 1994 signing of NAFTA giving large incentives for US companies to use the cross border factories. The *maquiladoras* were said to emphasize the *machista* or male-chauvinist culture that existed in Mexico and was especially prevalent in Ciudad Juarez where the male foreman within the factories exploited the

women workers. The bus transportation to and from the *maquiladoras*, since most women did not own cars, was also a problem. The bus stops were not near the women's homes obligating them to walk the unlit streets; this is where kidnappings took place.⁸ There was no direct correlation between the string of femicides and violence perpetrated by the DTOs; however, the lack of arrests during this period indicated the inability of local police forces to hold criminals accountable for their actions.

The Cartels and their Organization

In 2002, the leaders of the Juarez cartel, Vicente Carrillo Fuentes, Rodolfo Carrillo Fuentes, and their nephew Vicente Carrillo Leyva allied with Juan Jose Esparragoza Moreno, a former member of the Mexican Federal Judicial Police, Ismael Zambada, the Beltran Leyva brothers, and Joaquin Guzman Loera, El Chapo, the head of the Sinaloa cartel. They were known as the "Federation" and they controlled huge amounts of trafficking routes throughout Mexico and the border crossings into the United States. In 2004, the alliance fell apart when a dispute led to the assassination of Joaquin Guzman's brother, Arturo Guzman, and the Sinaloa cartel began the battle to control the lucrative Juarez smuggling routes known as the *plazas*.⁹ The Juarez Cartel controlled the city and much of the state of Chihuahua. Additionally they had a robust transportation, storage, and security operation throughout Mexico. They also were able to leverage a number of corrupt local and state law enforcement officers to ensure they could complete their deals.¹⁰

During this time, the cartels began to reorganize with dedicated enforcement wings separated from the trafficking business. The armed wing of the Juarez Cartel was called the La Linea who were comprised of current and former police officers tasked to

protect the *plazas*. Starting in 2003, they also used a prison gang called the Aztecas to enforce their territory. In contrast, the Sinaloa Cartel employed two local gangs to aid in their fight, Mexicles and the Artistas Asesinos.¹¹

Local Government

The local government in Ciudad Juarez lacked accountability to citizens or higher levels of government. At times during this period, PRI leaders controlled the government offices in the state of Chihuahua while Ciudad Juarez officials were in the PAN party.¹² Often state and local governments refused to work together. In 2001, there was a dispute during the Juarez mayoral election between the PRI candidate and Jesus Alfredo Delgado of the PAN party. With the disagreement in the results, the PRI Mayor refused to leave office until more than a year later when a federal court ruled in favor of Delgado. This standoff bled down to the state and local police as well.¹³

The lack of a strong, effective government at the local level allowed the mediocre police force to remain stagnant. The police institutions in Juarez were deeply corrupt enabling the city to remain a drug trafficking hub where violent crimes were carried out with impunity. Many current and former police were on the payroll of the Juarez Cartel.¹⁴ In another example of corruption, the Chihuahua state police commander and several other state and local police were arrested in 2004, when eight bodies were found buried in the backyard of a mid-level cartel associate. The state attorney general also resigned shortly after the case was reported.¹⁵

Mexican Federal Government

In 2000, Vicente Fox from the PAN party was elected president ending the reign of the PRI party of Mexico's federal government. The drug trafficking organizations, who were kept in check by the PRI government, slowly gained autonomy. They began buying off more local authorities to ensure their impunity and the free flow illegal narcotics.¹⁶ But President Fox refused to ignore corruption or the drug trade like the PRI led government. He began prosecuting corrupt senior officials rather than just firing them and looked to reform the public security agencies.¹⁷ He disbanded the corrupt Federal Judicial Police and created a new agency under the Attorney General's Office including 7,000 police officers each polygraphed, drug tested and trained.¹⁸ Then in 2003, President Fox signed a law providing better pay and benefits to federal civic service workers with the hopes to reduce corruption. He pressed the new federal investigators to seek out corruption and prosecute the offenders.¹⁹ Additionally, he took several new approaches to weaken the cartels. He reignited the policy to allow extraditions to the United States for prosecution²⁰, and in 2004, passed financial reforms cracking down on money laundering.²¹ Despite these changes, Mexico's presidency lost some of its power under Fox. The democratization, more freely elected candidates from various parties, caused gridlock in Mexico's Congress and the president was unable to make all the necessary changes to maintain control over the cartels.²²

Other Significant Factors

The economy continued to be strong in Juarez as it remained the epicenter of Mexico's *maquiladora* industry, hosting close to 300 in the city in the early 2000s.²³

Starting pay in the *maquiladoras* was roughly \$10 per day, twice the minimum wage elsewhere in Mexico.²⁴

With much optimism, the Juarenses sought ways to improve their city and regain control over the cartels. Beginning in 2001, a non-governmental organization in Juarez called the Strategic Plan for Juarez with a goal of creating a participatory, comprehensive development plan for the city. Between 2002 and 2004, 14,000 citizens participated in the program led by Lucinda Vargas. However, with little backing from the mayor's office, the plan ran into road blocks and was pulled back to refocus efforts on policies to promote "governability, a broad social pact for the city, and ad hoc initiatives to combat insecurity and impunity."²⁵

On the US side of the border, the US government crackdown on the smuggling routes through the Caribbean and Miami beginning in the 1990s continued. During this time, many of the Colombian cartels were forced to switch to land routes through Mexico. By 2004 US law enforcement estimated ninety percent of US bound cocaine was smuggled through Mexico; up from fifty percent in 2001.²⁶ This shift inadvertently gave the Mexican cartels more power and influence over the entire drug trafficking business including the ability to set prices for both the suppliers and the consumers.

Ciudad Juarez Case Study 2–The Felipe Calderon Presidency, 2006-2012

This case study is defined by the Felipe Calderon Presidency beginning in December 2006 and ending in December 2012. It includes the large rise in cartel-related violence throughout Mexico and many cases of extreme violence in Ciudad Juarez. The local police and Juarez officials were unable to contain the violence and protect the local

population. At the federal level, President Calderon declared war on the drug cartels and used federal forces in a frontal attack on the DTO leadership. Outside of Mexico, the global economic recession had impacts in Juarez reducing many jobs in the *maquiladora* industry. And to the north, the US government approved a massive aid package to the Calderon administration supporting their fight against the cartels.

Violence

During this period, there was a huge rise in cartel-related violence within Juarez and throughout Mexico. Total homicides in Juarez in 2006 were 315; by 2011, the number had climbed to more than 2,086.²⁷ Reports indicated “two-thirds of those killed in Juarez are between fourteen and twenty four years old.”²⁸ In 2010, Juarez is the world’s most violent city; that year the homicide rate per 100,000 in population climbed to 279, ten times greater than of all of Mexico,²⁹ see figure 3. In comparison in 2010, the homicide rates in Detroit, Michigan and Oakland, California were 34.5 and 22.0 respectively.³⁰

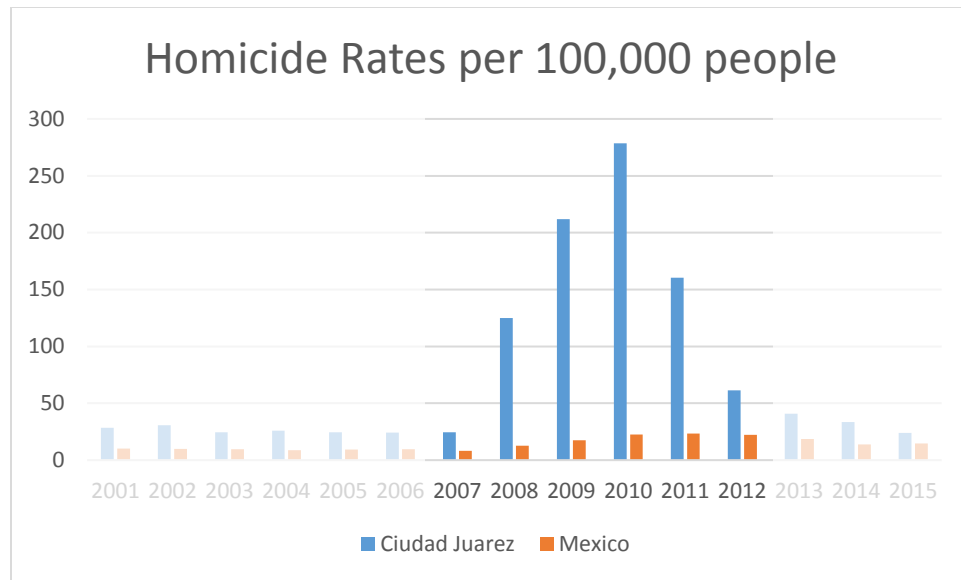


Figure 3. Homicide Rates per 100,000 people 2007-2012

Source: Author’s graphic depiction of data consolidated from: Elyssa Pachico, “Juarez Murder Rate Reaches 5-Year Low,” InSight Crime, January 4, 2013, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/juarez-murder-rate-reaches-5-year-low>.

Most victims of murders were not senior or influential cartel members, rather they were street level drug dealers, and small-time gangsters.³¹ Local gangs who were hired by the cartels to provide security were often paid in ‘product’, the drugs themselves. The gangs looked to diversify their activities to stay alive during the fighting and turned to local retail sales of the drugs on the streets of Juarez. This required the gangs to fight for control of local street corners to sell their drugs and thus increased the overall violence.³² Extortion was another of the new enterprises the gangs pursued. Throughout Juarez, the number of small business owners who were extorted grew during this period.³³

Other crimes included targeting citizens of significance during the cartel’s turf war. Several Juarez journalists were murdered; including the legendary crime reporter Armando Rodriguez.³⁴ In another incident, gunmen shot at paramedics in Juarez,

resulting in ambulance teams being more cautious when responding to calls at a crime scene.³⁵ During the height of the violence, no one was immune; in 2008 cartel members threatened to kill a police officer every forty-eight hours until the police chief, retired Army Major Roberto Orduna Cruz, resigned causing the police force within Juarez to collapse.³⁶ More than sixty police officers were murdered that year.³⁷ Even after the arrival of the Mexican military, the violence continued. More than thirty police officers were killed in 2009 and in 2010, 149 additional policemen were murdered in Juarez.³⁸ The cartels refused to relinquish control of the city to government security forces.

The violence was not limited to only the hands of the cartels; Mexico's military was tasked to provide security for the city which meant taking the city back from the DTOs. However, the military was not properly trained for the job of policing its own citizens. This led to many cases of reported military abuse of citizens in Juarez during the Calderon era. In one example, ten teenagers were detained and pressed for information about the cartels. Nine of those questioned were released, but one was never seen again. Though the soldiers denied they ever had the boy, Gustavo de la Rosa, the Chihuahua state human rights commissioner declared this an incident of "enforced disappearance" where state actors were likely to have taken part in the crime.³⁹

The Cartels and their Organization

In late 2007, the Sinaloa Cartel moved into Juarez in an attempt to take over the lucrative narcotics smuggling route to the United States. One indication they meant to remove the Juarez Cartel by force was the 2008 discovery by soldiers stationed in Juarez of twenty-five assault weapons, small arms, grenades, and ammunition in a safe house maintained by the Sinaloa Cartel.⁴⁰ During this period, the basic structure of the each of

the cartels remained the same; each relying on enforcement wings to protect their territory. The Juarez Cartel's paramilitary wing was La Linea, The Line, made up of current and ex-police. The Sinaloa cartel had Gente Nueva, New People, who sent hundreds of gunman to Juarez to fight for control of the crossing routes.⁴¹ "Hundreds of small neighborhood gangs were recruited by larger gangs, which were recruited in turn as enforcers by the larger cartels: La Linea (Juarez cartel) used Los Aztecas and Barrio Azteca; Gente Nueva (Sinaloa) allied with Los Mexicles and Artistas Asesinos."⁴² These groups did not implement the discrete tactics of the original cartels and murders skyrocketed. Additionally mass killings began; two examples include shootings at three drug treatment facilities in 2008-2009 where thirty-six people were killed, and the 2010 massacre at a late night party where fifteen teenagers were shot when a gang leader heard members of a rival gang might have been present.⁴³ Other tactics were meant to provoke terror amongst the population of Juarez and ensure the cartels were feared above all. A man arrested in a Juarez car bomb attack said he and others often use the media to get the word out about violence and spread the fear. Wanting to control the story lines after a violent attack, they would frequently contact media outlets. Callers, identifying themselves as members of the Sinaloa or Juarez cartels, would tell the media to not use certain names, or to publish or to not publish a certain story they were investigating.⁴⁴

During this time La Linea suffered a loss when its leader, Jose Antonio Acosta Hernandez (alias "El Diego"), was arrested in July 2011. Prior to his extradition to the United States, he confessed to directing 1,500 murders.⁴⁵ By 2011 and 2012, the Juarez Cartel lost much of its territory within Ciudad Juarez to the Sinaloa cartel.⁴⁶ The Juarez cartel, who was reportedly degraded by the conflict with the Sinaloa cartels, diversified to

other illegal activities to continue to fund its enterprise. These activities included local drug retail sales to the Juarez public who had the one of the highest rates of drug abuse in the country.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the Sinaloa Cartel was the best at implementing the new horizontal model and through the fighting was able to gain a foothold into the city's trafficking routes. In 2009, Forbes Magazine named El Chapo Guzman one of the world's richest people listing his business as "shipping." The magazine estimated his net worth at over one billion US dollars.⁴⁸

Local Government

Within the Ciudad Juarez local police force, corruption remained a huge problem. Local police salaries during the early Calderon era were between \$9,000 and \$10,000 per year. Officers could easily triple their salaries by accepting a bribe and looking the other way while the cartels carried out their operations.⁴⁹ Sadly, many on the force not only looked the other way, they got directly involved with the cartels and enforcement wings. For example in January 2008, the US government arrested Saulo Reyes Gamboa, a high ranking Juarez Police official, for drug-trafficking in El Paso, Texas.⁵⁰

Shortly after the violence reached its peak, Julian Leyzaola was hired as Juarez chief of police. On his first day in early 2011, members of the Sinaloa cartel left him a sign that read, "Welcome to Juarez, Julian Leyzaola. This is your first little gift and it's going to keep happening." The sign was attached to a tortured and duct-taped corpse.⁵¹ Undeterred, Leyzaola set out to reenergize the police force. "It was a police force with a very low morale, infiltrated by criminals, unable to regain control of its territory, unable to regain its prestige or the respect of the citizens,"⁵² said Leyzaola. At first, the former army officer and police chief from Tijuana, had problems in Juarez. Six officers were

arrested within Leyzaola's first three months and 160 other officers were either fired or quit. On the streets, "They were selling drugs like tortillas" said Leyzaola and he had to make serious changes.⁵³ He quickly implemented a 'broken windows' approach similar to the New York City method implemented by Police Chief William Bratton and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in 1994. He created databases of the crimes based on areas and then sent officers to those areas to target offenders. Critics said his methods allowed the police to harass minor offenders who were not part of the drug trade, but Leyzaola insisted his methods produced a better security environment and reduced the cartels' ability to operate in the area.⁵⁴

In October 2010, Hector Murguia was elected Mayor of Ciudad Juarez and continued to lead the city through the sharp decline of violence. Correspondingly, Cesar Duarte became Governor of the State of Chihuahua at the same time and the two began working closely together. Murguia states they had increased interaction and coordination between state, local and federal government efforts, and both policing and social development were the top two priorities.⁵⁵

Mexican Federal Government

President Felipe Calderon took office in December 2006. During the months leading up to the new president taking office, the cartels went on a rampage of brutal violence including more than four hundred killings and fifteen beheadings in Michoacana alone.⁵⁶ Shortly after Calderon took office, the La Familia Michoacana Cartel killed members of a rival cartel and discarded the severed heads on the dance floor of a local nightclub.⁵⁷ In the wake of the incidents, President Calderon deployed a team of federal police and military to take on the cartels.⁵⁸ He later discovered the federal police force,

the *Agencia Federal de Investigacion*, was full of corrupt officers. In fact, in 2008, the force's second highest official was arrested for taking hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes from the Sinaloa Cartel. President Calderon deconstructed the *Agencia Federal de Investigacion* in May 2009 and created an entirely new force. The new agency, *Policia Federal*, hired entirely new officers who were college graduates, vetted them well and paid them more to fight off corruption. By the end of Calderon's term, the new force had 35,000 officers, world-class anticorruption standards, a rigorous internal affairs department, and hosted the Mexico's first nation-wide crime information system.⁵⁹ In further efforts to counter the corruption throughout government, the Mexican Congress passed a law in August 2009 decriminalizing small amounts of cocaine, marijuana and heroin. This law was an attempt to remove a key source of corruption; police were unable to demand bribes from small time users.⁶⁰

In March 2008, Calderon sent the military into Juarez to help with security; 2000 army troops marched into the city. Then the violence surged. In 2009, cartel gunmen killed a police officer and demanded the resignation of the city's police chief, Roberto Orduna Cruz, and Calderon responded by sending in an additional 5,000 soldiers.⁶¹ For more than two years, the soldiers battled the cartels and attempted to restore security within the city.

Calderon pulled the Army out of Juarez in April 2010 and used Mexico's newly created Federal Police to target criminal gangs. The *Policia Federal*, 4,500 strong in Juarez, began to make some headway arresting "several hundred suspected cartel members as well as thousands of other alleged criminals."⁶² In July 2011, the Federal Police left Juarez and the city was controlled by the municipal police under the Police

Chief Julian Leyzaola who focused his force's efforts on establishing a sense of law and order in the city center.⁶³

Calderon's goals were more than just to reduce corruption and restore security within the affected cities. He aimed to takedown the cartels for good by starting with the top leaders. This kingpin strategy exploited any weaknesses within the cartel including their communications, supply and distribution points. Once the cartel's vulnerabilities were exposed, authorities could track down the top leaders.⁶⁴ Calderon saw progress with this approach capturing or killing more than forty cartel leaders including within Juarez where in October 2011, authorities arrested Noel Salgueiro "El Flaco" of the Sinaloa Cartel. El Flaco Salgueiro was said to be the top Sinaloa representative in Juarez and was tasked with taking over the territory through an assault on the Juarez Cartel.⁶⁵ Another major score for the authorities was the July 2011 arrest of Jose Antonio Acosta Hernandez (alias "El Diego") the head of the La Linea enforcement wing. Despite these two high profile successes in Juarez, analysts criticized the Calderon kingpin strategy pointing out the removal of midlevel leaders would have been more effective at reducing violence.

Todos Somos Juarez

On February 17, 2010, just two weeks after the slaying of fifteen people at a daytime birthday party, President Calderon came to Juarez and heard firsthand the reports from the mothers of the slain teens and was criticized for his government's ineffectiveness to protect its people. President Calderon then launched *Todos Somos Juarez*, We are all Juarez, program that included an anti-crime strategy at all levels of government. It also brought in civic groups and included social improvement projects to

loosen the grip of crime on the city. *Todos Somos Juarez* invested \$380 million of federal funds into the city and implemented six task forces focused on security, labor, health, economy, education, and social development.⁶⁶ Of these, the most effective was the security task force called, *Mesa de Seguridad*. This group had the authority to make demands of the military, federal and local police. The *Mesa de Seguridad* included representatives from the three levels of government, and twenty-four citizen delegates from the bar association, human rights commission, and *maquiladora* associations. Calderon's federal police commissioner in 2010, Facundo Rosas, was tasked to visit Juarez monthly and meet with the *Mesa de Seguridad*. Abel Ayala was the *mesa's* leader and they set up twelve committees

with responsibility for oversight of investigative police and prosecution, the immediate response center, secure corridors, a culture of legality, vehicle identification, reports on crimes in bars, citizen intelligence, crime indicators, kidnapping and extortion, preventive police, communication, and liaison with the attorney general. A representative of government participates in each commission alongside the private sector delegates.⁶⁷

Realizing the police force was unable to solve crimes and prosecute the offenders, the *mesa* demanded President Calderon assign two hundred additional police investigators to the Juarez attorney general's office who, of the staff of thirty-four, had only one investigator. Additionally, the *mesa* set up a program to report abuses by police. Federal police operated in Juarez from April 2010 to October 2011, and during that time, the internal affairs department working with the *mesa* brought cases against eighty-nine federal police with forty-two eventually convicted.⁶⁸

Other Significant Factors

The global economic recession, beginning in 2008, had a major impact on the violence levels within Ciudad Juarez. The slowing economy hurt the *maquiladora* industry. “Between 2008 and 2009, Juarez lost nearly 85,000 jobs out of 250,000, or 33 percent.”⁶⁹ The unemployed workers had nowhere to turn. To compound the problem, the US Border Patrol was cracking down on illegal immigrants attempting to cross into the looking for work. As a result, crime became the only option for many of the out of work young people.⁷⁰

Cooperation with the US government improved greatly under the Calderon administration. The Merida Initiative is a bilateral agreement between the United States and Mexico to maximize the effectiveness of existing efforts against drug, human and weapons trafficking. Born from an October 2007 meeting between US President George W. Bush and Mexican President Felipe Calderon, this agreement initially promised \$1.4 billion in US assistance to Mexico. Its three initial focus areas included: Counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and border security; public security and law enforcement; and institution building and rule of law with each gaining 2008 funding of \$306, \$56, and \$101 million respectively.⁷¹ Merida money was quickly funneled directly to Juarez. The city received \$15 million over three years to support crime prevention and community policing.⁷²

On the national level the Merida Initiative provided funds to combat the cartels in several ways. One was increased extraditions of cartel members to the United States for trial. Calderon recognized the impunity problem in Mexico and the lack of a good judicial and criminal justice system, thus the need for extraditions to the United States.

Extraditions increased from only four in 1995 to 115 in 2012 with more than 80 each year during Calderon's six years in office.⁷³ Second, the Mexican federal government conceptualized the cartels as corporations and targeted their money including their ability to exchange currency and launder the cash returning from the United States. In October 2012, Mexico's congress passed a law cracking down on the methods used by the cartels to launder money. The Merida Initiative funded new equipment and training for the Mexican attorney general's office new financial intelligence unit. Third, also via the Merida Initiative, the United States increased border surveillance and improved information sharing with Mexican law enforcement. The United States provided funds for a modernized telecommunications sharing system for sister cities along the US/Mexican border.⁷⁴ Finally, Calderon made an effort to reduce the number of guns getting into the cartels' hands from US sources. "Since 2006, Mexico has confiscated almost 100,000 weapons from the cartels—and, according to a 2009 report by the US Government Accountability Office, more than ninety percent of firearms seized in Mexico between 2006 and 2009 came from the US."⁷⁵ Both nations saw the benefits of greater cooperation via the Merida Initiative and have pledged to maintain a mutual relationship to combat the problems from the international drug trade.

Ciudad Juarez Case Study 3—The Enrique Nieto Presidency, 2012-Present

This case study is defined by the Enrique Nieto Presidency from December 2012 to present. This case saw the violence statistics restored to pre-Calderon levels within Ciudad Juarez; these numbers continue to be roughly twice those seen in other parts of Mexico. Most analysts believe the Sinaloa Cartel has prevailed and now controls some of

the trafficking routes around the city. The federal government, having returned the PRI party to power, has softened the frontal assault on the cartels and focused more on social reforms. The *maquiladora* industry recovered in Juarez and many citizens are back to work. Finally, the US government continues to support the Mexican struggle against the drug cartels with a revised version of the Merida Initiative that incorporates a balanced approach to include improving Mexico's social and economic infrastructure as a way to reduce the effects of the DTOs.

Violence

During this period, the levels of cartel-related violence within Juarez quickly reduced and steadied to levels common prior to the 2007 rise. Total homicides in Juarez in 2015 was 315 as compared to 10 years earlier with 320 in 2005. The homicide rate per 100,000 in population slowly reduced to approximately twice the national average, see figure 4.

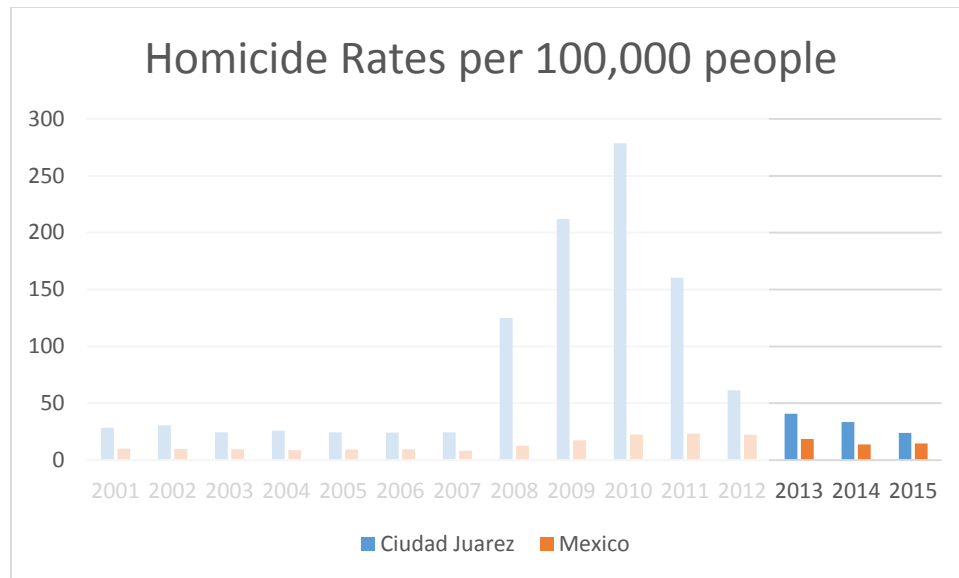


Figure 4. Homicides Rates per 100,000 people 2013-2015

Source: Author’s graphic depiction of data consolidated from: Elyssa Pachico, “Juarez Murder Rate Reaches 5-Year Low,” InSight Crime, January 4, 2013, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/juarez-murder-rate-reaches-5-year-low>; US Overseas Security Advisory Council, “Mexico 2014 Crime and Safety Report: Ciudad Juarez,” accessed February 12, 2016, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=15634>; US Overseas Security Advisory Council, “Mexico 2015 Crime and Safety Report: Ciudad Juarez,” accessed February 12, 2016, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17214>.

In addition to the number of homicides, other violent crimes continued to plague Juarez to include kidnapping, car theft, and extortion. Although the number of kidnappings were down since the height of the cartel violence, Juarez saw seventy-eight, thirty-four, and ten kidnappings for ransom in 2012, 2013, and 2014 respectively. The actual number of kidnappings is thought to be drastically underreported due to the mistrust of local police by citizens. The number of reported carjackings in Juarez were also on the decline with 1,842, 583, and 290 incidents during the first three years of the

Nieto Presidency. The number of reported cases of extortion was also down during this period with local criminals only able to target small and medium size businesses.⁷⁶

The Cartels and their Organization

Many analysts believed the main drop in violence was due to the peace between the cartels. They insisted the two cartels decided to call a truce and divide the territory. The weakened Juarez Cartel agreed to control the center and west of the city including two international bridges. They also maintained the rights to controlling domestic drug sales and prostitution within the city.⁷⁷ On October 9, 2014, Juarez Cartel leader, Vicente Carrillo Fuentes was arrested, leaving the Juarez cartel in an even more weakened state.⁷⁸ The Sinaloa Cartel agreed to control the rural area to the west of the city, the traditional major trafficking route. Other security experts believed the Sinaloa Cartel dominated the area with Juarez Cartel reduced to street gang with very little territory and unable to control the smuggling market in the city. In contrast, Mayor Murguía strongly denies the rumors of a pact between the cartels and contends the reduction in violence was due to an increase in effective policing.⁷⁹ Independent of the cartels, the street gangs remained prevalent within Juarez with roughly 900 gangs operating on the streets in 2013 running prostitution, small-time drugs, and theft.⁸⁰ Some analysts feel the local gangs are just as threatening and dangerous as the Sinaloa and Juarez Cartels.⁸¹

Outside of Ciudad Juarez, the Sinaloa Cartel dominated the drug trade throughout the western half of Mexico. Even after the arrest of its notorious leader, Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, the cartel remained unified and strong. Guzmán was arrested in February 2014 by Mexican Marines at a hotel in the resort city of Mazatlán. Then in July 2015, he famously escaped through a 1.5 kilometer long tunnel dug under his prison cell.

(This was Guzman's second prison escape; he had escaped before in 2001 by hiding in a laundry cart.) Guzman was again captured in January 2016 and remains in prison in Mexico.⁸²

Local Government

Police Chief Leyzoala continued to improve the local police in Juarez. Some of his tactics brought criticism by Juarenses who claimed his crackdown on petty crimes was just an excuse for his officers to harass the local poor. But Leyzoala contends this was a necessary process to restore a state of law and order. Leyzoala was replaced by Jesus Antonio Reyes as Chief of Police in Juarez. Then in May 2015, Leyzoala was shot twice by a cartel member but he survived. He claimed the gunman, allegedly Jesus Antonio Castaneda Alvarez told him "this is a message from Director Reyes." Reyes denied being involved.⁸³ Mayor Murguia of Juarez from 2010–2013 claimed the drop in violence was due to the police efforts. His strategy was properly deploying better equipped police throughout the city and constructing community centers offering sports, music, and other activities for families and at risk youth.⁸⁴

Mexican Federal Government

Enrique Pena Nieto was elected president of Mexico and took office on December 1, 2012. The next day he, along with the leaders of the three main political parties, signed the "Pact for Mexico": this included ninety-five promises for education reform, new energy policy, social security and a national violence prevention program. The violence prevention program called the National Program for Crime Prevention (PRONAPRED for its Spanish initials). This program budgeted \$9 billion in 2013 as well as \$10 and \$11

billion in 2014 and 2015 respectively. PRONAPRED included a program providing \$200 million to state governments to allow subsidies for municipalities and non-profit organizations.⁸⁵ PRONAPRED provided Ciudad Juarez with \$6 million per year in subsidies since 2013 (the second highest given to a municipality; Acapulco being the highest.) The funding focused on three geographic regions within the city with high crime rates and provided libraries, youth arts programs, a drug treatment center for teenagers, and a toy exchange for children swapping toy guns for toys that did not promote violence. Only one program involving the community and police interaction was funded; this program “brought police into elementary schools to perform puppet shows against drug use and domestic violence.”⁸⁶ Two short falls of the PRONAPRED program were: it failed to lay “the groundwork for a long-term strategy based on evidence, open to outside evaluation and with clear benchmarks.”⁸⁷ And it had no provisions for the citizen participation, which was the best known legacy of *Todos Somos Juarez*. The *Todos Somos Juarez* initiative ended with the start of the Nieto Presidency. In 2015, the only remaining *mesa* from *Todos Somos Juarez* was the *Mesa de Seguridad y Justicia* (Security and Justice Working Group).⁸⁸

President Nieto planned to continue the process to professionalize the federal police force. Although progress was slow with only ten percent of Mexico’s police forces completing the process to date. Nieto also announced his plan to create a new national gendarmerie security force, 40,000 strong.⁸⁹ Again progress has been slow; the force was launched with only 5,000 personnel. But the Nieto administration made efforts to ensure they recruited an elite force free from corruption. The gendarmerie, with an average age

of twenty-eight, have never served on another police force and were specially trained by the Mexican Army and police forces from Colombia.⁹⁰

Other Significant Factors

Nearing the end of President Calderon term the economy in the United States and Mexico had bounced back from the fall of 2008. 2010 saw record highs in exports and by 2011 the jobs had returned to the *maquiladoras*.⁹¹ The *maquiladoras* remained strong into the Nieto Presidency, but the factories only produced low-paying labor jobs. According to the Juarez Mayor, as many as sixty-five percent of the Juarez residents lived in poverty.⁹²

In May 2013 Presidents Obama and Pena Nieto updated the Merida Initiative strategy including four pillars: Disrupting the operational capacity of organized crime, institutional reforms to sustain the rule of law and respect for human rights in Mexico, creating a 21st century border, and building strong and resilient communities. “As part of the Merida Initiative’s emphasis on shared responsibility, the Mexican government pledged to tackle crime and corruption and the US government pledged to address domestic drug demand and the illicit trafficking of firearms and bulk currency to Mexico.”⁹³ In total from 2007 to April of 2015, US Congress allocated \$2.5 billion in funding to Mexico through the Merida Initiative, however due to delays in implementation of projects, only \$1.3 billion was delivered.⁹⁴

Comparative analysis

With detailed case studies established, a comparison across each case study can be completed. This section analyzes the markers across each of the Fox, Calderon, and

Nieto case studies. Within each marker (violence, cartels, local government, federal government, and other significant factors) similarities and differences are identified. Finally the results are presented and the factors leading to the rise in violence are determined.

Violence

Violence in Ciudad Juarez changed dramatically between each of the case studies reviewed, see figure 5. During the Fox administration the number of homicides were relatively flat. The only noteworthy indicator of violence was the high number of reported deaths of women, many of whom worked in the *maquiladora* industry. Most of these murders went unsolved.

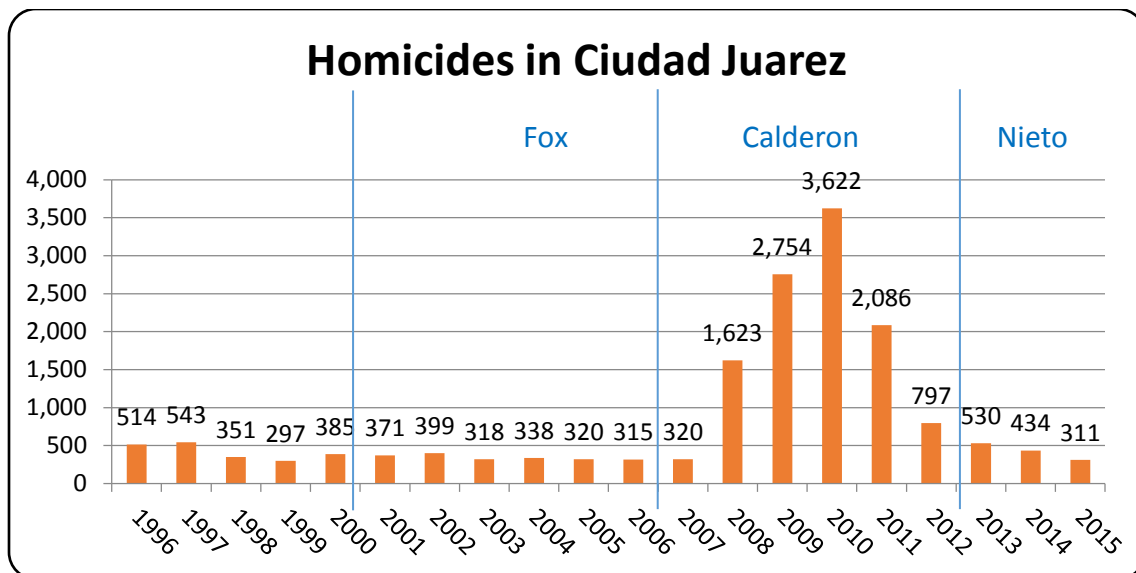


Figure 5. Homicide in Ciudad Juarez over all case studies

Source: Author's graphic depiction of data consolidated from: Carlos J. Vilalta, "Towards an Understanding of Community Organization Against Crime: The Case of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico," *Stability* 2, no. 1 (March 2013): 3, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.ao/>; Elyssa Pachico, "Juarez Murder Rate Reaches 5-Year Low," *InSight Crime*, January 4, 2013, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/juarez-murder-rate-reaches-5-year-low>; US Overseas Security Advisory Council, "Mexico 2014 Crime and Safety Report: Ciudad Juarez," accessed February 12, 2016, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=15634>; US Overseas Security Advisory Council, "Mexico 2015 Crime and Safety Report: Ciudad Juarez," accessed February 12, 2016, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17214>; Molly Hennessy-Fiske, "Former murder capital of Mexico presents sunnier image for pope," *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 2016, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-pope-juarez-20160209-story.html>.

During the Calderon administration there was a large increase in violence beginning in late 2007. The numbers of murders increased dramatically thru July of 2011 and then began to decrease sharply. In addition to an increase in cartel-related homicides, this same time period had an equal increase in mass killings, murders of journalists and government officials, kidnapping, extortion, and other street crimes. Finally there was an

increase of violence perpetrated by the government as the military moved in to reestablish security. This included justified violence against cartel members as well as illegal violence by inexperienced or corrupt military and federal police. By the start of the Nieto presidency in 2012, the sharp drop in violence had slowed to a gradual tapering off of violence to pre-Fox levels.

The Cartels and their Organization

The cartels themselves were responsible for much of the violence within Ciudad Juarez. The Juarez and Sinaloa Cartels were at one time in a strong alliance dominating the Mexican drug market. As the alliance fell apart in 2004 both cartels, along with many other cartels in Mexico, began to develop militarized enforcement wings. These wings were separated from the drug trafficking side of the business; this both ensured the kingpins' maximum impunity from the authorities, and ensured the enforcement wings could focus on their skills to protect the cartel without the burden of transporting the drugs themselves. Additionally, as both cartels armed themselves, they each aligned with local criminal gangs to aid in the fight to control territory and diversified into other criminal ventures to remain competitive. Both the enforcement wings and local gangs intensified the violence by their very nature and the connection with the local police who often worked side by side with them. Finally, an attack by the Sinaloa Cartel to control the Juarez trafficking routes prompted even more violence. Both sides continued to fight to retain access to the lucrative smuggling routes even as military troops occupied the city.

The bloodshed slowed only as reports of a truce between the cartels emerged. Analysts believed mutual killings eventually wore down both sides and exhausted each

other's pool of killers. Another explanation for the drop in Ciudad Juarez violence was the arrest of two key lieutenants on each side of the fight. In 2011, authorities arrested Jose Antonio Acosta Hernandez, the leader of the La Linea enforcement wing, in July and then two months later nabbed Noel Salgueiro, the force behind the Sinaloa threat to take over Juarez. These arrests coincided with the drop in homicides in 2011.

Mexican Government–Local

The local government throughout each of the case studies failed to take the proper actions to maintain law and order and to protect their citizens from crime. Within both the Fox and the Calderon case studies corrupt local police were found to be working for or taking bribes from the cartels. In the worst of these cases, the Juarez cartel employed a large number of current and ex-police as part of their La Linea enforcement wing. Other cops not willing to participate supplemented their meager salaries by allowing criminals to operate with impunity. Since there was near zero probability the cartels or any violent actor would be held accountable for their violent actions, there was nothing stopping a criminal from taking that action. The cartels were already criminal organizations (illegal drug trafficking); therefore, there was no reason to not carry out that trafficking with violence. The law was the only deterrent and in its absence, there were no restraints.

Similarly, local officials failed to protect their citizens. First, they failed to hold the police accountable. Second, they failed to provide a social structure resilient to changes in crime or the economy. The local government throughout the Fox presidency and the beginning of the Calderon presidency failed to provide young people steady jobs, education or any hope for an escape from poverty. Eventually Calderon implemented some aid programs to the locals in Juarez under *Todos Somos Juarez* and Nieto continued

similar programs and using Juarez as a model repeated similar programs in other at-risk municipalities.

Mexican Government–Federal

One common aspect of each of the case studies was the democratization of the Mexican system. After seventy-one years of rule by the PRI party, Fox was the first President elected from a competing political party, PAN. During this era, Mexican leaders at all levels of government were truly being chosen by the people. The democratization had some downsides however. As the PRI lost its firm grip over the country, the cartels gained some freedom. Out from under the hold of the PRI party leaders, the cartels were left unfettered to carry out business as they saw fit.

The opening of the Mexican political system also prompted the need to reduce corruption that had permeated throughout the PRI government. Fox was the first to seek out and prosecute corrupt officials, but both Calderon and Nieto continued to follow his lead as it became apparent the people demanded a government they could trust. A government freed from corruption was key to maintaining legitimacy of the new, more-open political system. Again a downside to the reduced corruption was the cartels could no longer rely on bribes to carry out business with impunity. They shifted to coercion to influence government officials. The government's reduced power resulting from the democratization along with a crackdown on corruption was one factor leading to a gradual rise in violence from 2000-2006. However the sharp rise in violence came only after the federal government's use of the military.

The frontal assault by the federal government utilizing the kingpin strategy was first seen under the Calderon administration. Calderon sought to destroy the cartels from

the top down and reduce their influence over the Mexican way of life. However, his actions only resulted in more violence. The military was not trained to enforce laws on its own citizens. While for a few short months in 2008, the military was successful in reducing crime; the cartels regrouped, spread to the suburban areas and continued the fight. In Juarez, the cartels not only continued to fight each other, they fought back against the military, police and citizens living throughout the city.

One result of the kingpin strategy was not seen in Juarez, but was seen in other parts of Mexico was the fracturization of the cartels. This was due to the fact that few of the top leaders of the Sinaloa or Juarez Cartels were arrested during the period of peaking violence. In fact, authorities took down two top kingpins in Juaquin Guzman from the Sinaloa Cartel and Vicente Carrillo Fuentes from the Juarez Cartel in 2014. Both leaders were arrested after the main fighting in Juarez was over and neither cartel showed any evidence of breaking down into separate organizations. If anything, the cartel had already fractured on its own due to the fallout after the breakup of the Federation. But there was no evidence of fracturing due to the federal government's strategy.

Federally funded social programs, like *Todos Somos Juarez*, first implemented in 2010 certainly did not add to the level of violence within the city. On the contrary, the evidence showed these programs likely aided in the drop in violence near the end of the Calderon Presidency. The best example of a federal program within Juarez was the *Mesa de Seguridad* that is still operating today. This program helped bring in citizens to join the fight by enabling a bridge between the public and the police who they did not trust. "The *Mesa* set up the Center of Citizen Trust, it became easier to register complaints, and the Center has pursued cases of abuse that have led to the jailing of 50 federal police."⁹⁵

Additionally, the *mesa* successfully lobbied the Calderon administration to assign additional investigators and have aided in the development of an anti-kidnapping unit.

Other Significant Factors

The United States government played a significant role in the rise in violence in Juarez. Changes in US law enforcement strategies in the 1990s focused interdiction efforts in the Caribbean funneled the Colombian drug trafficking onto mainland Mexico. This fact combined with the US efforts to take down Colombian drug lords like Pablo Escobar enabled the Mexican drug cartels to gain profits and power. From 2000 to today, they dominated the drug market throughout North and Central America. Secondly, the United States maintained lax gun control laws compared to Mexico and failed to interdict both assault weapons and bulk cash crossing the border southbound into Mexico. The guns and money enabled the cartels to perpetuate their violent activities and bribe corrupt officials to maintain impunity. Finally, the United States, via the Merida Initiative, encouraged the Calderon Administration to aggressively pursue the cartels. They funded and rewarded the use of the military and the kingpin strategy to take down top cartel leaders. This was an attempt to keep the cartel related violence problem in Mexico and prevent it from spilling over into the United States. In contrast, one way in which the United States aided Mexico's fight against the cartels was the prosecution of extradited drug lords. The US justice system, including its prisons, were much more likely to convict and hold a high-ranking cartel leader than the stumbling Mexican Judicial system.

The global economic recession had an impact on the violence within Ciudad Juarez. While the *maquiladora* industry was strong during the early 2000s, one downfall

existed. The lack of capital investment back into the community by the *maquiladora* companies set Juarez up for failure. The industry did not provide any upward mobility within the companies and no safety net once the plants reduced production and laid workers off. As the recession of 2008 hit Juarez, many of the workers lost their jobs. The citizens living in poverty created easy recruiting for the Juarez local gangs.

Results

Ciudad Juarez

The comparative analysis shows three factors led to the rise in violence in Juarez between 2006 and 2012. The first is the war between the militarized Juarez and Sinaloa Cartels over the smuggling routes through and around the city. Both cartels developed new enforcement wings after the breakup of their alliance called the Federation in 2004. These enforcement wings were violent by design, made up of ex-military and police. Additionally they were separated from the trafficking duties and assigned only enforcement tasks designated to guard controlled territory.

The second factor was the poor governance at the local level in Juarez. The local police were corrupt and often worked with the cartels to protect their drug smuggling transactions. Similarly, the local government implemented no social programs to provide the citizens social resiliency. The citizens of Juarez had no safety net when the economic recession hit in 2008.

The final factor was the failed frontal assault by the Mexican federal government without a plan in place to protect ordinary citizens. Calderon declared war on the cartels and backed up his declaration by sending in the Army. His attempt to completely destroy the cartels without first setting the conditions to protect the population allowed the war to

spill into the lives of ordinary people. His strategy gave the cartels only two options: flee or fight back. The cartels choose to fight back. They had no alternative to make a living; no gradual plan to work back into civil society.

These three factors are clearly not independent of each other and certainly perpetuate each other creating the large spike in violence seen in Juarez in 2009 and 2010. The poor policing and corruption within the local government enabled the cartels to exist and operate. The cartels continued to operate at relatively low levels of violence with impunity. Then the level increased due to the Sinaloa and Juarez Cartels' dispute and the local government was unable, or unwilling, to take action. It was then the federal government responded. But Calderon's war only escalated the violence as the cartels fought back to survive. A conclusion follows: the combination of the warring cartels, the ineffective local policing and the failed strategy by the federal government caused the escalation in violence in Juarez from 2006-2012.

Mexico

The case studies analyzed show the data for one Mexican city hard-hit by the cartel-related violence from 2006 through 2012. Juarez is a unique city located on the border with the United States and though the specific events occurred only in Juarez, similar events were carried out in other Mexican cities, Monterrey and Acapulco for example, during the same time period.⁹⁶ It is rational to induce the same causes determined for Juarez also apply to Mexico as a whole. It is important to note the evidence does not apply to all of Mexico since the violence by the drug cartels is restricted to certain areas. But by reviewing the data on Mexico on average, it does apply to all the areas affected by the drug traffickers.

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- ¹⁷ Loyola, "Mexico's Cartel Wars," 36.
- ¹⁸ Andrianopoulos, "National Security Redefined," 19.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
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- ³² Beittel, *Mexico’s Drug Trafficking Organizations*, 35.
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- ⁴⁰ Flannery, “Calderon’s War,” 186.
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- ⁷⁹ International Crisis Group, “Pena Nieto’s Challenge,” 37.
- ⁸⁰ Dudley and Nieto, “Civil Society, the Government, and the Development of Citizen Security,” 6.
- ⁸¹ Shannon K. O’Neil, “Refocusing US-Mexico Security Cooperation,” Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere and Global Narcotics Affairs, June 18, 2013, accessed January 10, 2016, http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ONeil_Testimony.pdf.
- ⁸² InSight Crime, “El Chapo.”
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⁸⁴ Conger, "The Private Sector and Public Security," 11.

⁸⁵ International Crisis Group, "Back from the Brink," 16.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 19-21.

⁸⁹ O'Neil, "Refocusing US-Mexico Security Cooperation."

⁹⁰ Mark Stevenson, "Mexico Creates Special Federal Force of 5,000 Gendarmes to Combat Widespread Economic Crime," *Canadian Press*, August 22, 2014, accessed April 4, 2016, Newspaper Source Plus, EBSCOhost.

⁹¹ Beaubien, "Business Booms On Mexican Border Despite Violence."

⁹² Joseph J. Kolb, "Dispatches from the Field: Ciudad Juarez," *Americas Quarterly*, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.americasquarterly.org/content/dispatches-field-ciudad-ju%C3%A1rez#4751>.

⁹³ Seelke and Finklea, *US-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Merida Initiative and Beyond*, 6.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁵ Conger, "The Private Sector and Public Security," 14.

⁹⁶ Heinle, Molzahn, and Shirk, "Drug Violence in Mexico," 21.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve results, we will work with strategy, with a real and effective coordination between levels of government in order to combat impunity and make justice prevail and peace. The cities, towns, roads, must again be quiet spaces in which Mexicans transit safely, without fear of losing freedom or life.

— Enrique Peña Nieto
Inauguration Address December 3, 2012

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to research the factors leading to the rapid rise in cartel-related violence in Mexico from 2006 through 2012. During this period, Mexico saw an unprecedented increase in the level of violent crime perpetrated by the DTOs. Homicides related to drug trafficking activities averaged more than 10,000 per year and in 2011 peaked at more than 22,000 drug related murders.¹ When factoring in Mexico's total population, the homicide rate measured to more than 22.3 deaths per 100,000 people each year from 2010-2012.² The GOM took extreme measures in order to curtail the violence. In 2007 and 2008, President Calderon sent the military into the cities most effected by the criminal outbreak. However, the federal government's response only fueled more violence by the cartels who fought back to retain their territory. Chapter 1 further detailed this problem and provided background information.

Chapter 2 reviewed and highlighted the significant literature available on this topic. Many organizations, both government sponsored and private, have written about the extent of the violence in Mexico at the hands of the drug cartels. While there was disagreement about the cause of the rise in violence beginning in 2006, most authors,

scholars, and security analysts believed the origins were the ongoing wars between the cartels themselves. They noted the corruption at all levels of government enabled the cartels to act with impunity in both their trafficking operations as well as their violent enforcement tactics to gain or retain territory. Additionally, much of the literature critiqued the government's response and suggested the overall kingpin strategy of the Calderon administration as well as the use of the military only exacerbated the problem and led to an even higher rise in violence. Finally, the literature also identified the global economic crisis of 2008 and the US government's policies on drug trafficking and immigration law enforcement as causes that increased the levels of violence.³

Chapter 3 defined this study's methodology. This qualitative study reviewed three case studies of Ciudad Juarez from three distinct time periods: 2000-2006, 2006-2012, and 2012-present. Within each case study this research identified the following markers: levels and type of violence, cartel organization, local government action, federal government action, and other significant factors. These markers provided the basis for a comparative analysis across the case studies to identify the factors leading to the rise in cartel-related violence.

Part one of chapter 4 detailed the analysis of the each of the markers within each of the three case studies. Case study one began with a review of the two cartels active in Ciudad Juarez: the Sinaloa Cartel and the Juarez Cartel. These cartels each developed militarized enforcement wings used to hold territory and ensure the smooth operations of the drug trafficking activities. The local government during this period was riddled with corruption as much of the police force also worked for the cartels. The federal government under the leadership of the first PAN President, Vicente Fox, was slowly

reforming from the many years of single-party PRI rule. President Fox led a campaign to crack down on corruption, but many of his other efforts to improve social stability are blocked by congress.⁴ Other significant factors included the US law enforcement policy focusing on the Colombian cartels' smuggling routes through the Caribbean. These efforts forced much of the trafficking routes to shift to Mexico and thus increased the power and profits of the Mexican DTOs.

Case study two reviewed Ciudad Juarez during the Calderon administration. During this period, the Sinaloa and Juarez Cartels fought over control of the lucrative smuggling routes in and around the city. They continued to use militarized enforcement wings and further recruited local street gangs to join the fight. The local government was unable to maintain security within the city and in 2008 the federal government deployed the Army into the city to regain control. The cartels, not wanting to lose their foothold in the city, fought back against the government. In 2010, President Calderon replaced the military with federal police who remained in Juarez for more than a year while the violence reduced. Outside factors highlighted in this case study included the global economic downturn than reduced jobs in the Juarez *maquiladora* district. The out of work young people were easy recruits for the cartels and local gangs who provided an income. Additionally, the US and GOM chartered the Merida Initiative program to help fund Mexico's fight against the cartels.

Case study three detailed the city during the Nieto Presidency. During this period, the war between the Sinaloa and Juarez Cartels had greatly slowed and the total violence reduced within Juarez. The local police under the leadership of Chief Julian Leyzoala improved and successfully retained order after the withdrawal of the federal police.

President Nieto instituted the pact for Mexico and continued social programs uniting community activists, local business and local police using the model developed in Juarez called *Todos Somos Juarez*. The United States and Mexico revised the Merida Initiative to include four pillars attacking the cartels as well as instituting government and social reforms to strengthen the government of Mexico and their partnership with the United States.

Part two of chapter 4 completed the comparative analysis of each of the markers across the three case studies. The results of the analysis showed there were three factors leading to the rise in cartel related violence. The first was the cartels themselves. After the alliance known as the Federation fell apart in 2004, the Sinaloa Cartel made an effort to gain total control of the Juarez smuggling routes. This attack was extremely violent as both groups employed their enforcement wings to fight the opposing cartel. Additionally, they further recruited local street gangs to join the fight. This violent war was enabled by the second factor, the poor governance at the local level. The local government, particularly the local police, failed to maintain law and order within their city. Their inability to prosecute the perpetrators of violence emboldened the cartels and gangs who continued to carry out criminal acts with impunity. Further, their corruption often saw them directly contributing to the violence as they carried out tasks as “employees” of the cartels. The third factor, the failed frontal assault of the federal government against the cartels, only increased the violence. When President Calderon sent the military into Juarez, he did so without first protecting the citizens who lived there. As the cartels fought back, the military was not trained or equipped to fight the cartels in the midst of their own citizens.

This study sought to identify the factors that caused the rapid rise in violence in Mexico at the hands of the DTOs. Given the results of the analysis of the Ciudad Juarez case studies, it is apparent three factors contributed to the violent crime within the city. Although, Juarez is a unique city, similar evidence exists for other Mexican cities overrun by the cartels during the same time period. It is logical to deduce equivalent factors led to the rise in violence throughout Mexico. Many local municipalities were plagued by corrupt, ineffective policing and governance enabling the cartels to carryout violent operations with impunity. Calderon's deployment of the kingpin strategy using the frontal assault by the military and federal police also failed in other states and cities throughout the country. These factors combined to cause the exponential rise in cartel-related violence in Mexico from 2006 to 2012.

Recommendations

After completing the research required to write this study, I compiled a short list of recommendations related to the three factors leading to the rise in violence identified within the results. All recommendations are to the government of Mexico, both federal and local, with the last two also applying to the government of the United States. The first recommendation is to solve the problem of impunity within Mexico. Law enforcement and judicial reform must be paramount on the agenda for policy makers within Mexico. When cartel members, or any criminal, know there is only a small fraction of a chance he will be held accountable for his crime, there is simply no deterrent, other than moral, to carry out an illegal act. A competent and trusted police force at the federal, state and local levels is key to tackling the impunity issue. Without law enforcement that is corruption free, the people will seek out other ways to protect themselves. *Autodefensas*, self-

defense groups, or vigilantes have already gained momentum in Mexican states like Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Michoacan.⁵ Without government intervention, these groups have no check to their power and they could disintegrate into criminal groups themselves such as was the case for the La Familia Michoacana Cartel.

The second recommendation is to develop strong social and economic stability mechanisms. Particularly, I recommend investing in programs that promote economic and social safety nets to support citizens during hard times. Here the Mexican government can look to the United States as an example. Note the contrast between Juarez and El Paso: Juarez, once dubbed the murder capital of the world, is only three hundred feet from El Paso, “America’s safest city.” In 2012, Juarez had an estimated 58 homicides per 100,000 people while El Paso had roughly 0.6 per 100,000 people. So taking the population density into account, you are hundred times more likely to be a victim of violent crime in Juarez rather than El Paso.⁶ I propose there are two reasons for this fact. One is the rule of law; see recommendation one above. The second is because the US government has established programs to support its citizens who lose their jobs. This is done through government support programs to create more jobs, so its population can simply get another job. Additionally, there are government programs to support citizens who are forced to go long periods without a job. These programs give people an alternative to regressing into a life of crime.

The third recommendation is for the GOM to recognize that international drug trafficking is an international problem and therefore, must have an international solution. Calderon’s strategy was not only wrong because he failed to first protect the population, but also because he unilaterally took on the cartels without coordinated support from the

countries that produce or consume the products feeding the overall problem. Moreover, the GOM cannot dismiss the problem as only belonging to the producers and consumers either. They should not focus only on reducing the violence by the cartels without the complementary attempts to reduce the cartels' trafficking capability simultaneously. All countries of the world must recognize that all components of the drug trade, producing, trafficking, and consuming, are equally dangerous to the security of all nations.

The fourth recommendation is for both the Mexican and US governments to focus on reducing the profits of the DTOs. Although the exact amount of cash profits that flow back the cartels from the market within the United States are unknown. Experts estimate the profits range from 19 billion to 29 billion dollars annually.⁷ This money gives the cartels their power; it is their center of gravity. These huge profits enable the cartels to bribe officials, purchase weapons, and recruit more personnel. Both US and Mexican law enforcement must find ways to reduce the profits gained by the smuggling of illegal drugs either by confiscating the product as it moves north or by recovering the cash returning back south.

The final recommendation is to continue national level efforts to reduce the consumption of drugs both within the United States and Mexico. While law enforcement should pursue efforts to reduce the supply, other government programs must be aimed at reducing the demand. "Studies show that a dollar spent on reducing demand in the United States is vastly more effective than a dollar spent on eradication and interdiction abroad and that money designated for the treatment of addicts is five times as effective as that spent on conventional law enforcement."⁸ The reduced demand lowers cartel profits and subsequently their power.

Issues for Future Study

During this research two issues were identified as potential future areas for further study, but fell outside of the scope of this thesis. The first is the *maquiladora* industry in Ciudad Juarez and other Mexican border cities. These *maquiladoras* offer good paying jobs for Mexicans, but lack in the ability for employees to have vertical mobility within the company. Additionally they fail to provide the community any support with little requirements or incentives to fund, schools, parks, health care centers, or other programs promoting social stability. Finally, the string of femicides linked to the Juarez *maquiladoras* has lost recognition in the press since the outbreak of cartel violence in the city. The vast majority of the nearly nine hundred murders of women in the last twenty years have gone unsolved.⁹ Further research is needed to answer questions about the true value of the *maquiladora* industry and to understand the cause of the murders of women in Juarez.

The second area for further research is the applicability of programs similar to the *Todos Somos Juarez* program to US cities hard hit by drugs and crime. President Calderon initiated the *Todos Somos Juarez* program in Ciudad Juarez after a violent attack on a birthday party left fifteen teens dead at the hands of the drug cartels.¹⁰ The program linked civic groups, local businesses and law enforcement to prevent crime and improve health, education, and the economy. Though only one of the series of workgroups and committees still persists today, the security workgroup, the plan unified efforts by many community groups and improved trust between the citizens and the local government. In many of today's US cities, there is a lack of open communication and trust between the citizens and law enforcement. Further study could answer if similar

programs, if implemented in US cities, could help prevent crime and poverty as well as improve the perceptions of racism within local law enforcement.

¹ Heinle, Molzahn, and Shirk, “Drug Violence in Mexico,” 8.

² Ibid., 3.

³ Campbell, “No End in Sight,” 21.

⁴ O’Neil, “The Real War in Mexico,” 65.

⁵ Lee, “Mexico’s Drug War.”

⁶ Ryan McMaken, “Borderland Homicides Show Mexico’s Gun Control has Failed,” Mises Institute, January 18, 2016, accessed January 25, 2016, <https://mises.org/blog/borderland-homicides-show-mexicos-gun-control-has-failed>.

⁷ Beittel, *Mexico’s Drug Trafficking Organizations*, 38.

⁸ O’Neil, “The Real War in Mexico,” 68.

⁹ Girish Gupta, “Mexico’s Macho Blood Sport,” 35.

¹⁰ International Crisis Group, “Back from the Brink,” 8.

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